

PRABUDDHA BHARATA *or* **AWAKENED INDIA**

**A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896**



September 2014

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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE *Spiritual Evolution*

In an ocean there are huge waves, like mountains, then smaller waves, and still smaller, down to little bubbles, but back of all of these is the infinite ocean. The bubble is connected with the infinite ocean at one end, and the huge wave at the other end. So, one may be a gigantic man, and another a little bubble, but each is connected with that infinite ocean of energy, which is the common birthright of every animal that exists. Wherever there is life, the storehouse of infinite energy is behind it. Starting as some fungus, some very minute, microscopic bubble, and all the time drawing from that infinite storehouse of energy, a form is changed slowly and steadily until in course of time it becomes a plant, then an animal, then man, ultimately God. That is attained through millions of aeons, but what is time? An increase of speed, an increase of struggle, is able to bridge the gulf of time. That which naturally takes a long time to accomplish can be shortened by the intensity of the action, says the Yogi. A man may go on slowly drawing in this energy from the infinite mass that exists in the universe, and perhaps, he will require a hundred thousand years to become a Deva, and then, perhaps, five hundred thousand years to become perfect. Given rapid growth, the time will be lessened. Why is it not possible, with sufficient effort, to reach this very perfection in six months or six years? There is no limit. All beings will at last attain to that goal, we know. But who cares to wait all



these millions of aeons? Why not reach it immediately, in this body even, in this human form? Why shall I not get that infinite knowledge, infinite power, now?

The ideal of the Yogi, the whole science of Yoga, is directed to the end of teaching men how, by intensifying the power of assimilation, to shorten the time for reaching perfection, instead of slowly advancing from point to point and waiting until the whole human race has become perfect. All the great prophets, saints, and seers of the world – what did they do? In one span of life, they lived the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time that it takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the power of assimilation, thus shortening the time.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*,
(Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013), 1.174-75.



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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

The Boat of Knowledge

September 2014
Vol. 119, No. 9

Acharya Shankara

विज्ञान-नौका

यदानन्दरूपं प्रकाशस्वरूपं निरस्तप्रपञ्चं परिच्छेदशून्यम् ।
अहं ब्रह्मवृत्त्यैकगम्यं तुरीयं परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥ ३ ॥

*Yadananda-rupam prakasha-svarupam
nirasta-prapancham parichchheda-shunyam;*

*Aham brahma-vritttyaika-gamyam turiyam
param brahma nityam tadevahasmi. (3)*

That which is of the nature of bliss and light, and in which the universe is rejected, [which] is free from limitations, [which] is transcendental reality, [which] can be attained only by the mental state in the form of 'I am Brahman', I am indeed that Supreme Eternal Brahman.

यदज्ञानतो भाति विश्वं समस्तं विनष्टं च सद्यो यदात्मप्रबोधे ।
मनोवागतीतं विशुद्धं विमुक्तं परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥ ४ ॥

*Yadajnanato bhati vishvam samastam
vinashtam cha sadyo yadatma-prabodhe;*

*Mano-vagatitam vishuddham vimuktam
param brahma nityam tadevahasmi. (4)*

Due to ignorance of which the entire universe appears and, gets destroyed instantaneously with the knowledge of that Atman, [which] is beyond mind and speech, pure [and] free; I am indeed that Supreme Eternal Brahman.

THIS MONTH

We are all confused by the word 'corruption'. We do not know how to handle it, mostly because although we know that corruption exists, we are unable to trace its cause. **The Seeds of Corruption** traces the roots of corruption and also suggests ways to avoid it. Ironically, while corrupt people damage the fabric of society, those condemned as convicts and sent to prisons like the one depicted in this month's cover page, sometimes enrich the quality of the lives of their fellow beings. Tracy Lee Kendall, an inmate of Coffield Unit, Tennessee Colony, Texas and a student of Vedanta, recounts the evolution of the **Circle** of like-minded Vedantins and how they continue to influence many lives and assert the inter-connectedness of lives. A similar continuum is now evident in humanities. Dr Ravindra K S Choudhary, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Vinoba Bhawe University, Hazaribag, puts forth **An Indian View of Interdisciplinarity**. He explains the need for a dialogue between the different branches of humanities and also tells us how it has existed in the Indian tradition since ancient times.

The coming together of Eastern and Western thought is integral to the interdisciplinary nature of academic studies today, requiring a deep understanding of thought currents worldwide. Karl Popper was a bright philosopher of recent times. Joe E Barnhart, former Professor of Philosophy and Religion Studies at the University of North Texas and former President of the American Academy of Religion, Southwest division, presents the **Religious Dimensions of Karl Popper's Philosophy**.

Social unrest on account of religions is primarily due to not understanding of one another's religions. So, the solution to avert such unrest seems to be in devising a system where the followers of every religion can have cordial relations with practitioners of other religions. Åke Sander, Professor of Psychology and Sociology of Religion, Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg, gives us ways of **Perceiving Other Religions**. This paper is based on a conference lecture delivered by him at the Banaras Hindu University in 2012.

Mistaken identities cause great confusion. Common names cause such mistakes. Dr Shyamali Chowdhury, Centre for Indological Studies and Research, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, shows us how **Swami Sachchidananda of Bhavnagar** could have been mistaken for Swami Vivekananda who took the same name for a period of time. Somenath Mukherjee details in **Franklin B Sanborn: A Reassessment**, the great facets of a personality, who had come into contact with Swami Vivekananda.

Renunciation is paramount in spiritual practice and that is why Sri Ramakrishna stressed developing this quality. The company of those who have renounced worldly life ennobles us and their service helps us to attain the goal of spiritual life, as taught by Swami Adbhutananda in the twenty-second part of **Eternal Words**. The swami's words are translated from *Sat Katha* published by Udbodhan Office, Kolkata.

The Seeds of Corruption

IF ONE WERE TO PONDER on the one problem that is gnawing at the entrails of society today, the answer would probably be corruption. It is so deep-rooted a problem that we do not even see it as one. Instead we have accepted it as a part of our lives. We consider corruption as something we have to accommodate if we are to live comfortably. Rather than solving this problem, we have become part of the problem. We help corruption grow, secretly hoping that others would not mind us also being corrupt. We become partners in crime. These are just truisms. The question to be asked here is: 'Why does one become corrupt?'

Killing a person is wrong and illegal. All of us know that and so generally we do not kill anyone. Similar is the case with other actions we know to be outright bad. But what is it about corruption that makes us live with it? All of us know that it is not something to be proud of, and yet the number of corrupt people is alarming. When does one become corrupt? When one forgets the duties that one has professed to do, the duties that one has consciously and willingly accepted to do. A teacher agrees to teach, a doctor agrees to heal, a police officer agrees to protect, and so on. If one does not do what she or he has agreed to do on taking up a particular assignment, there begins corruption and that person starts becoming corrupt. Corruption is also caused by being untruthful. If a person has done something wrong and wants to evade punishment, that person joins hands with like-minded people and hides the wrongdoing. This leads to

accepting things, which otherwise would have been unacceptable. Here again are sown the seeds of corruption.

Why is it that some societies have a stronger tendency towards corruption than others? The answer to this question lies in the cultural patterns of a society. A child sees adults engaging in activities that the child is taught are bad. However, the child sees that these adults have ways to cover up their wrongdoings, sometimes making even the child an accomplice or a silent witness. This ingrains in the mind of the child the belief that wrongdoings are all right, as long as you can properly cover them up!

There is another important cause of corruption. Human beings, like other living beings, have a primitive instinct, which ensures survival and excellence in the race of evolution. If a person runs on sensing a danger to life, that is because of the primitive tendency in the lower part of the brain. The same is the case with other instincts such as the search for food. So, when a person sees that a given task can be accomplished by some shortcut means, and does not foresee any apparent bad consequences, that person goes ahead and takes the shortcut. That is one of the ways that corruption is born.

The other primitive feature of the brain of human beings that leads to corruption is herd mentality. In their initial days of fighting against nature for survival, human beings learnt to imitate the behaviour of one another to ensure that one did not face the same dangers that their fellow beings had already suffered from. Evolution


has not been able to completely erase this herd mentality and so, when a person sees that being corrupt makes one 'safe', she or he becomes corrupt and avoids being on the wrong side or on the side of fewer persons.

Parenting is an integral part of the development of an individual. Some parents reward their children for doing things they were supposed to do anyway. While on the one hand a child is taught ethical values, on the other she or he sees that adults, sometimes even teachers, indulge in corrupt or unethical acts. This trains the child to see ethical values as the right things to teach or proclaim, and at the same time to accept corrupt actions as not so wrong if the situation so demands. If a child does her or his homework or studies for an examination, some parents reward the child with leisure time, a treat, a movie, or some such thing. The child can get the idea that one could get a reward for doing something that one was supposed to do in the first place. Rewarding a child for standing first in an examination is understandable, but rewarding for just studying defies explanation. Such encouragement could lead to the child grow up to become an official, who demands a bribe for doing a job, for which she or he receives a salary. If only a child could be shown by example, that by doing one's duties without receiving any additional benefit and by being chastised or punished on failure, she or he could develop into a responsible individual.

An essential element of character that ought to be taught to children is to take ownership of their actions, and to take responsibility for what they do. This emboldens an individual to face the consequences of one's actions and also inspires one to act rationally and responsibly, after weighing all the choices and the probable results of actions. Conversely, when a child learns from the actions of her or his parents that responsibilities

could be shied away from, she or he grows into an individual who is wary of accepting any outcome of one's actions.

Success in life has been shown to be of paramount importance by educational systems around the world. People will go to any extent to achieve success. If success can be achieved by 'helping' the right people in the right places, what is the harm, asks the common person. The hunger for power and the greed for wealth drives a person to corruption, particularly when one thinks that such power and wealth cannot be attained through ethical means. Generally such a thought arises because one does not want to strive to attain the desired goal. A lack of struggle translates into a lack of skill and one tries to make up for this deficiency by coming to some 'agreement' with others for ignoring the absence of skill. This is another seed of corruption.

The root cause of corruption is the deflection from one's true goal of self-realization. Such deflection makes us corrupt and takes us away from the path to perfection. In the graphic language of Acharya Shankara in *Vivekachudamani*, it is like the bouncing of a ball down a staircase. On the first bounce, the ball falls down two steps, four steps on the second, eight steps on the third, and so on. Similarly, when we get deflected from our goal of self-realization, we keep on committing mistakes, not in arithmetic but geometric progression. Before we realize it, we are already laden with the weight of a humongous mass of wrongs. The only way to be free of corruption is to understand that success, in the ordinary sense, is not the goal of life. Our goal is self-realization. Material success can be attained through ethical means. Together, these two convictions will help us conquer the lure of corruption. We need to burn the seeds of corruption and ensure that this venomous serpent does not raise its hood and strike at the peace and balance of a healthy society. 

Circle

Tracy Lee Kendall

ON THE COLD NIGHT of 10 January 2010, William Franklin Jones III, Tracy Lee Kendall, and Jaime Lopez assembled for evening recreation between 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the A-side gym on the H H Coffield Unit, largest in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), for the first meditation session of the newly formed Ramakrishna-Vedanta Texas Prisoners' Group (RVTPG). What brought about the meeting that Sunday and what causes a group of men including those with extremely violent criminal convictions and lifestyles to come together and peacefully meditate and form a fellowship? What brought positive change into their lives, encouraging them to serve society, which they used to harm? What inspired them and others to form RVTPG?

The Circle Forms

The first link in the forming of our circle may be said to be Swami Prabhavananda and his disciple, Christopher Isherwood, for it was their translation of the Bhagavadgita that I first discovered. This introduced me to Vedanta. Shortly thereafter, a continuous line of disciples of Swami Prabhavananda have been spiritual mentors to me and influential to what was developed here. Sometime after writing to the address I found in the Gita published by the Vedanta Society of Southern California, I received a reply from Pravrajika Varadaprana, a disciple of Swami Prabhavananda, dated 7 April 2001 and thus begun a correspondence lasting until her illness no longer permitted it. She was instrumental in teaching me about Vedanta and living a spiritual life

and she also provided me with a large amount of literature to study, and it was this literature and ideas associated with it that Jaime Lopez, a friend of mine since 2000, took an interest in and began discussing with me.

There were a number of things which captured our interest. Sri Ramakrishna's message of harmony among religions; the fact that Vedanta does not encourage blind dogmatism, but reason and practical application; the emphasis that what we seek is already in us as our true nature; the view that the 'bad' as well as the 'good' which befall us are part of the necessary blessings in life and are to be accepted and resolved—these are just a few of the facets in the diamond of Vedanta which caught our eye. These ideals are also vital in rehabilitation as many of us were caught up in a criminal lifestyle due to blindly accepting and embracing extremely detrimental thought patterns and habits in selfish attempts to find completeness through pleasures found outside of ourselves and not regarding harmony with or acceptance of anyone or anything. We sought only what we saw as 'good' for us and fought against anyone or anything we saw as 'bad' for us, that is, any obstacle to our pleasures, and due to lack of reason, we did not even realize what we truly wanted and chased only that which brought others and ourselves harm. Sri Ramakrishna once said, 'A house without light becomes stricken with poverty.'¹ The Gita reflects:

Of a person meditating on sense objects,
Attachment in them arises; from attachment,
Desire is born; from desire,
It is turned into anger.

From anger arises bewilderment;
 from bewilderment,
 the memory wanders;
 from the memory wandering,
 destruction of the intellect;
 from destruction of the intellect,
 one's intense destruction.²
 This door of hell, which is the destroyer of the
 Soul, is of three kinds—
 passion, anger, and also greed.

Therefore one should forsake these three (16.21).

That would be an accurate description of the cycle we were subjecting ourselves to except we were not forsaking anything that was destructive. Over time though, as some very loving and supportive and selfless people began affecting our lives, the direction we took moved more and more towards that told in the following passage in the Gita:

O son of Kunti,
 a person who is free from these three doors
 to darkness strives for the good of the soul
 Thereby he attains the highest Goal (16.22).

When Pravrajika Varadaprana was no longer able to correspond, Pravrajika Shuddhatmaprana began corresponding after I was advised to write to her. As a disciple of Swami Satprakashananda, she brought an additional element of influence.

Learning from the disciples and works of Swamis Prabhavananda and Satprakashananda gave us a wide spectrum of both, subject matter to learn from and approaches to learn through, in addition to books on Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, various scriptures, and other such literature. Our practice and understanding began to widen more and this variety proved to be a necessity to prepare the way for the wide variety of people about to become a part of the movement here as time went on.

In 2006 Pravrajika Shuddhatmaprana encouraged me to contact Swami Swahananda at the Vedanta Society of Southern California and

I sent a letter to him. He initiated me on 30 June 2006. I was also encouraged to contact Swami Sarvadevananda and I first received correspondence from him during the Christmas of 2006.

A rich variety of 'seeds' had been planted in our spiritual path and their presence brought blessings that have never stopped.

Our Evolution

Like any spiritual body, there have been tranquil as well as challenging times for us. We continued to learn and develop in our practice and it showed not only in the way we lived, but also in the fact that the changes were gradual and not forced. We stopped taking drugs, stealing, and living selfishly not because of change from outside—the catalyst was within. The closer we get to our true nature, harmony, unity, virtue, and other such things automatically follow. Not only spiritual advancement, but more effective and efficient living, which allows us to serve others better or even begin to want to serve them in the first place. The application of Vedanta to rehabilitation is beyond value.

William Franklin Jones III was the cause of our conscious effort to become an actual group. Before William, our physical unity consisted of meeting for a spiritual discussion with others spanning around five years on the spiritual path. When William expressed interest in Vedanta and became involved with us, we began meeting with him to help him learn about Vedanta in a far more structured way than previously. We had to coordinate the time and place of meetings since we often did not live on the same wing of the prison. We had to coordinate what materials were needed and how to distribute them through each other, and decide on additional factors we needed to deal with in order to interact with each other as a spiritual body.

The obstacles we face are not always confined to internal spiritual issues, or inside the group; we have also struggled with discrimination towards us due to the fact that we embraced Vedanta, especially during the earlier years of our journey. While times have changed somewhat, this area of the United States can be challenging for those of faiths deemed not 'traditional' in the locality. This phenomenon has plagued many state prison systems in the US historically as well, and this is not so much due to the systems themselves, but because of certain individuals using their positions to further personal agenda. But as Sri Sarada Devi taught, even the 'bad' things which befall us are blessings as well. While other faiths were given services, Vedantists were forced to meet on the recreation yards, in the dayrooms—communal gathering places on the wings where we live—and anywhere else we could. Often we were subjected to open discrimination and even more often, indirect discrimination such as denial of privileges that others were routinely granted. These and the other prejudices we faced only served to bind us closer together as a group and strengthen our sincerity because there was absolutely nothing else to gain except that we might be able to meet and become fellow Vedantins. We continued to learn, practise, and grow strong in our convictions.

In 2008, I received a letter addressed to me: Mr Tracy Lee Kendall, Coffield Unit, (the largest) Men's Prison in Texas, USA.

It was a miracle that it even made it to me without an address, not even a city, and since it did not have my TDCJ number, the authorities did not even have to give it to me. Things are strict in prison, but the mail room personnel kindly wrote '875004' next to my name so I was able to receive it. It was from Kathy Hamill, an Englishwoman living in Greece. A dedicated Vedantist and disciple of Swami Dayatmananda,

she had read an article I published in *Prabuddha Bharata*³ while she was in India at Belur Math. Her inspiration and guidance have been a blessing for us ever since.

William was initiated by Swami Swahananda on 26 August 2008. In 2009, I received a letter dated 25 May 2009 from another disciple of Swami Prabhavananda, Cliff W Johnson. He brought a strong devotional influence to us besides being an inspiration in humanitarian efforts.

On 9 August 2009, Brian Long, who had been studying with us for some time, was initiated by Swami Swahananda as was Jaime Lopez on 26 December.

So, due to the selfless service of these loving people, our destructive tendencies were steadily eroding, but how exactly had we evolved individually? I was born in Torrance, California, but grew up in Oklahoma and Texas. I began stealing when I was four and this progressed to vandalism, weapons, drugs, and alcohol between eleven and thirteen years old to burglary and gun running before I was caught at seventeen. All of these decisions led to a man's death when I was nineteen. I was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to sixty years' imprisonment in 1999. I was twenty-five. Jaime was born in Texas, but grew up in California and Oregon, involved in drugs and gang life; he came back to Texas and ended up with a murder conviction and a life sentence. William was struggling with complications from a head injury and was in prison on a methamphetamine conviction. Brian, struggling with a heroin addiction, had a robbery-assault charge. I had so much depression and rage that I would black out and come to in a distant location. Most of us could speak of nothing but drugs and crime, we were all using drugs for various periods even after we were incarcerated. Most of us were fighting constantly, had

fallen out with our families, and William could not even form complete sentences.

Over time, as our spiritual levels began to rise, we quit fighting, stealing, drugs, and began repairing family relationships, gaining an education, and repairing our lives. Brian was taking classes, William was not only taking correspondence courses, but was writing letters to his family who had not been speaking to him for some time, but now began to. Jaime began publishing his art in magazines. And I ended up accumulating enough credits in college for two Associate's degrees and also began publishing articles, meditation guides, and so forth. None of us were involved in violence anymore and the depressive mental states we had been in were lifting as we began finding peace and true freedom for the first time in our lives, and in turn, began influencing those around us with it. We were at a loss as to how we could have even embraced the lifestyle we previously had.

Under the guidance and inspiration from those who had reached out to us and what they shared, how were we evolving as a group? On 7 January 2010, we decided on the name and details of the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Texas Prisoner's Group and received a postcard dated 24 December 2009 from Swami Swahananda giving us permission to use that as a name. On 17 March 2010, we agreed on the Coffield Vedanta Circle being the name of our local body; the title 'Circle' was suggested by Cliff W Johnson.

The vision we have for our structure is for local circles to form within groups consisting of circles in a given prison system or jailing system. Our ideals and activities conform as much as practically possible to 'Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission: Their History, Ideals, Activities' issued by the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna

Mission. And in the spirit of Swami Vivekananda's message of serving rather than begging, we seek to help society through various means such as arts, writing, funds generated through these and other possible ways. There are so many programs aimed at helping prisoners, and often, when prisoners are shown 'helping out', they are actually engaging in already existing programs funded from the outside. We wish to break this cycle through self-sufficiency and producing what we use to help rather than merely passing on what is given to us. This can present challenges unique to each penal institution, such as the fact that most Texas prisoners do not get paid for their labour, but even if it is just advice or encouragement, we all have something to give. We sent a letter to the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math in 2011 about our vision. Our goals were mentioned in an article by Swami Divyananda in the January 2012 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*.⁴

All we lack at this point is someone on the outside to receive information from existing groups and assist in coordinating efforts. We seek for our activities to be charitable and relief efforts solely on the outside of prison without interfering with or affecting the operations of any prison system. With the lack of political agenda, value of equality and other virtues, and a good level of efficiency, the organisational structure and activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission provides us with an exceptional template.

On 24 March 2010, Don Davis became the first non-initiated member of the Coffield Vedanta Circle. While not a Vedantist, his interests did coincide in many ways, and being non-exclusivist, we have a rich tapestry of religious, cultural, racial, and historical backgrounds represented in the Coffield Vedanta Circle: Zen

Buddhist, Shakta, Vedantist, Agnostic, various Yogas, and one who characterises himself as a 'rabid atheist'. We are racially diverse with African Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics, and our backgrounds range from military to music, from entertainment to homeless, and to gang members and everything in between. These differences can frequently be the basis for division in prisons, but they are never issues for us. The harmony effected by Sri Ramakrishna's message cannot be denied.

In 2012, I began corresponding with Devadatta Kali, who brought yet another dimension of spirituality to our group and continues to open our understanding. On 30 December 2013, Roger Reister, Delon Roberts, Jason Roberson, and Antonio Garza became the newest members of the Coffield Vedanta Circle. Each of them brought a fresh perspective and valuable insight to all of us.

Full Circle

So where are we today, 1 June 2014? Moving towards the goal! There are no Hindu or Vedantist services here yet, but we do now have an Eastern Religions class which I help to facilitate. We can now congregate more easily and even review audio-visual records of our spiritual ministers which is vital due to our lack of contact with them.


William was transferred to a different prison and Brian was released from prison and we pray they find peace.

Respecting the private lives of those who have reached out to us, I have shared some details, but all of them continue to inspire, guide, and support us maybe not even realising the impact they have on us. They include those of virtue, accomplishment, and stations in life who sacrifice time and resources which most people would not even consider for us. Two of them, Pravrajika Varadaprana

and Swami Swahananda have left their mortal frames, but the love and work they planted continue to grow.

Others too, such as Daya Sharma, who for years has driven eight hours to come and share meditation on the science of spirituality, and Ms Earl who works with prisoners having chronic and terminal illnesses, have made tremendous sacrifices of selfless love.

The list could go on and on, but who is in the Full Circle once we have come full circle? It is everyone and everything—all is connected. Beyond religions and labels and differences we are One whether we like it or not. And we have a choice; we can work to support the circle or we can let it break, allowing everything to break. Harmony is the key to unity and seeing things as they truly are allows us to better reach out in harmony to help support the circle of unity. Regardless of where we are or how difficult things are for us, we can help serve those who often have no one else willing to reach out to them.

The shining path we have travelled from the most ancient times through various ways and faiths, to the life of Sri Ramakrishna, and then Swami Vivekananda's journey to the United States, and even to a prison on a farm road in Texas is about just that—reaching within ourselves and reaching out to others with the love we find there. The love we find when we come full circle, back to our true Self. Let there be peace! 

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An Indian View of Interdisciplinarity

Dr Ravindra K S Choudhary

IN THE ARENA OF HIGHER EDUCATION, we nowadays hear frequent calls for more interdisciplinary studies and research. But the widespread format of interdisciplinarity has been dominated by Western ways of thinking. This format was formulated in the post-modern West and the rest of the world took it up through colonial legacy. Despite its several advantages, the dominant framework of interdisciplinarity has certain inherent problems, which can be significantly mitigated by incorporating the Indian view of interdisciplinarity. But before that we need to see what interdisciplinarity really is.

The Idea of Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity generally refers to a particular set of activities that is marked by interface and interaction between different disciplines or areas of knowledge. An interdisciplinary study involves, as a minimum, two distinct disciplines and, as a maximum, that is as an ideal, all disciplines. Interdisciplinarity is thus ideally one and as such it must reflect the essential unity of all human knowledge.

Different disciplines represent oversimplified views of issues. We have a variety of studies of life and the world. They show varying interests in tackling the problems of various walks of life. Each of them accords special importance to views and values relevant to that particular aspect of life. However, no discipline is self-sufficient; they all are always in need of each other for the breadth and depth of an adequate world view. This mutual complementariness of

different disciplines necessitates interdisciplinary studies. Obviously, interdisciplinarity is an ever expanding field open to all, and it is as vast, varied, and vibrant as life itself.

Interdisciplinarity is often understood in a contrasting relation with disciplinarity. Generally, disciplinarity is suggestive of boundary, policing, control, regimentation, specialization, monotony, and the like; whereas interdisciplinarity suggests openness, diversity, freedom, transcendence, cooperation, potentialities, novelties, and much more. Disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity constitute two extremes of our educational experience. For those who are faithful to disciplinary boundaries, knowledge production is like the work of a silkworm cooed in a specialized pursuit. On the other hand, an interdisciplinarian is like the bee that gathers nectar from flowers of faraway fields. Interdisciplinarity widens our intellectual horizons by ranging across disciplines; it keeps us open to innovations and breakthroughs taking place in other disciplines; it also facilitates a democratic dialogue among different disciplines. Hence, interdisciplinarity is the preferred mode of intellectual inquiry.

India, an Ideal Setting for Interdisciplinarity

If diversity and openness, tolerance and synthesis, and freedom and transcendence, are essential to interdisciplinary studies, then India has all the potential for an ideal setting for interdisciplinarity to flourish. From the very beginning of her history, India has been a country of many

languages, many races, and many religions; in a nutshell, she is truly a multicultural nation. Given this milieu, one of the first things that a child learns in India is to respect the other's point of view. In effect, Indians never believed that there is only one way of approaching the truth. Such an intellectual landscape rich in cultural diversity and adequately accommodating perspectival pluralism has been very much conducive to integrated learning.

One is thus required to take many factors into account in reaching any conclusion in academic studies. In the *Sushruta Samhita*, we are clearly warned against jumping to conclusions by studying just one discipline: '*Ekam shastram adhiyano na vidyat shastranischayam, tasmāt bahushrutah shastram vijaniyat chikitsakah*'; by studying one scripture alone, a definite conclusion cannot be made, therefore a physician should study many scriptures.¹ In India, knowledge was practised in the interdisciplinary spirit from very ancient times. Different disciplines, in a significant sense, represent various cultural forms, and being interdisciplinary amounts to supporting the plea for a dialogue of civilizations. For, entering into a dialogue with 'the other' is an important part of transcending boundaries. It is no good, according to Bhartrihari, to remain confined to one's own tradition. On the path of one's intellectual and spiritual development, such an insular approach is a stumbling block. Hence, Bhartrihari's suggestion is: 'The intellect acquires critical acumen by familiarity with different traditions. How much does one really understand by merely following one's own reasoning?'²

The Dominant Interdisciplinary Format

At the root of the interdisciplinary format much in vogue nowadays, is the modern framework of knowledge. In this framework, knowledge

production and the practice of expertise are carried out primarily in disciplinary terms. Even interdisciplinary ventures take place within it against the backdrop of disciplinarity and the compartmentalization of knowledge.

In hindsight, the modern mind gradually categorized knowledge as falling within distinct disciplines. Hence, as Stephen Toulmin (1922–2009) points out, 'issues that do not fall within the scope of a recognized discipline are scarcely seen to qualify as "academic" at all.'³ Underlying this pigeonholing process was a disciplinary criterion that has become a tool for legitimizing suitable bodies of knowledge and marginalizing the unsuitable ones. Any piece of knowledge thus must fulfil the set criterion. If the indigenous knowledge of non-Western people does not suit any discipline, it is most likely to be discarded as 'non-knowledge'. Thus, the Western 'compartmentalization of knowledge delegitimizes knowledge that does not fit into established disciplinary compartments'.⁴

Disciplinary compartmentalization is effected through several means. Cognitive classification such as bibliographical categorization has been effective in reinforcing disciplinary insularity. Professional practices, such as associations and conferences, have also been conducive to compartmentalization. But organizational divisions made among different departments of modern universities have been decisive factors in such compartmentalization. Obviously, what is missing in this structure is a holistic conception of knowledge that is essential to reflect a *Weltanschauung*.

The interdisciplinary format widely in use is, by and large, issued from this *comdepartmentalization*⁵ of knowledge, and so it is equally problematic. 'For inherent in the interdisciplinary format is a mechanistic and aggregative, at best integrative, process rather than

a transformative process which is what really takes place. What actually happens can perhaps be better described as trans-disciplinary or extra-disciplinary knowledge rather than an interdisciplinary orientation.⁶ It is thus important, for our purpose at hand, to look into the origins of the dominant framework of knowledge within which we all are normally set to carry out our varied intellectual pursuits including interdisciplinary studies and research.

Genealogy of the Dominant Framework

The first thing to be noted about this framework is that it was formulated in the West under the strong influence of the logic of modernity. It relies heavily on the capacity of rationality which is regarded as the prized possession of humans. The capacity of humans to arrive at rational solutions to worldly problems has been reinforced by science and technology. For some Westerners, science is originally a Western achievement. According to them, it constitutes such a distinctive feature of Western civilization that 'we need not say "western" science. For there is no other kind, nor did science really spring up independently elsewhere.'⁷ Further, mainly due to the historico-cultural reasons, the scientific paradigms of the West hold a hegemonic position in the various knowledge pursuits of the rest of the world.

This hegemony eventually leads to a particular sort of homogenization of knowledge. It can generally be observed that 'whenever the agents of modern societies confront traditional cultures that may have more comprehensive embedded notions of natural knowledge, they are likely to screen such knowledge for useful information and appropriate the information into the modern framework.'⁸ But all this is an exercise in the *ex situ* treatment of the alternative ways of understanding life and the world. Information thus wrenched away from the

truth of the situation degrades even the nature of knowledge into an instrumental search for control and dominance. The modern human wants not only to know the secrets of nature but also attempts to exert power over nature and the world.

The dominant framework of knowledge is extremely utilitarian, authoritative, and anthropocentric in character. It promotes a 'narrowly utilitarian view of science based on a conception of knowledge as an instrument of power in man's search for control and domination.'⁹ Obviously, it takes little notice of other traditions of knowledge such as Indian, Chinese, Arabian, African, and Caribbean to name a few. These non-Western traditions generally put forward a view that knowledge is integral to life. So one can easily experience in them a conception of knowledge and existence that is far more integral and nearer to life than the dominant Western tradition. For, in them 'knowledge is considered as at once a means and an end, not just a means of control and domination as in the modern West' (27–8). It is interesting to note that these insights link the accounts of interdisciplinarity to the ideas which are nowadays commonplace in environmental thinking. Interdisciplinarity too should ultimately be based on a holistic and integral conception of life and the world.

However, techno-science is the dominant note of the day, and the actual practice of interdisciplinarity is overwhelmingly influenced by this in terms of matter and manner, models and metaphors. But there is a big problem with this techno-scientific imperialism. 'In scientific terms, the order of nature is devoid of deeper meaning; it no longer conveys existential certitude, it is of no help when we strive to understand why we live, how we should live, what are the right things to do, what is our place in this

world.’¹⁰ Thus scientism has been a real problem in the field of interdisciplinarity. It is this pervasive problem that gives rise to the predicament of the modern human:

The modern predicament is not that the deeper meaning of nature and the perception of the sacred in things have become inaccessible in our culture—we still know them. The predicament is that such knowledge is dissociated from and external to the instrumental knowledge of nature accumulated through science and technology.

And there is little hope of ever bridging this gap and integrating (or reintegrating) the different ways of understanding nature. The notion of objective positive science has often been contested. But the dream of an alternative natural science has never come true (407).

It is quite relevant to ask whether different conceptions of knowledge might have arisen in the West from a potentially different historical point of departure, such as Paracelsus (1493–1541) or Leibniz (1646–1716) as instantiated in Goethe’s (1749–1832) writings, rather than those of Newton (1643–1727) or Copernicus (1473–1543).¹¹

Link between Knowledge and Power

The dimension of power that is inextricably linked with the modern conception of discipline-bound knowledge also deserves our attention here. It has quite correctly been observed by a scholar:

There is a connection between viewing knowledge as leading to power and putting the pursuit of knowledge in bounded disciplines. If knowledge is viewed as giving us power rather than a better preparedness to creatively participate in the dynamics of relationships in life, then there is an inherent tendency to project the boundaries of this guarantor of power and to rigidify these. Disciplinary boundaries become a servant to the will to power of the men of knowledge.¹²

It is against this backdrop of disciplinary compartmentalization and the attending notion of knowledge as power that interdisciplinary studies seem to make much more sense. The point to be noted is that disciplinary boundaries are not just for the sake of creating administrative divisions in the form of different departments in the university. They have much more to do on the part of practitioners and participants. Charles E. Rosenberg (b.1936) rightly writes: ‘It is the discipline that ultimately shapes the scholar’s vocational identity. The confraternity of his acknowledged peers defines the scholar’s aspirations, sets appropriate problems, and provides the intellectual tools with which to address them; finally it is the discipline that rewards intellectual achievements.’¹³ In the process of knowledge production, these disciplinary departments thus function as the loci of power, position, and privilege in the modern university system.

The undercurrent of the will to power at times becomes so strong that certain sorts of groupings among the practitioners of disciplinarity soon come up. Disciplinarity develops a kind of ethnocentrism around itself. This ‘disciplinary ethnocentrism’ gives rise to ‘a redundant piling up of highly similar specialties, leaving interdisciplinary gaps.’¹⁴ As a result, separate disciplines are often formed despite having almost indistinguishable problematics, analogous methods, and identical goals. For instance, ‘Sociology and Anthropology are distinguishable only because of a historical accident, while political science and law have always been close cousins even if they always have not recognized themselves as such. Social psychology has provided a common framework for all these studies and the value perspective as embedded in the cultural creations provide common frame of reference for all of these.’¹⁵

But why is the dimension of power so crucial in the production and dissemination of knowledge? The main reason behind it is that there prevails a conception of *knowledge as information* whose priority is not to provide a meaningful framework for social understanding. 'Reductionism remains the ruling mentality of technoscience and commodification its structural form.'¹⁶ It thus turns knowledge into a sheer commodity like any other marketable item. And, 'Once viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold, Knowledge itself became merely a means to an end, and culture became wholly a commodity disseminated as information without permeating the individual who acquired it.'¹⁷ Thus, if knowledge is reduced to information, it inevitably leads to the play of and will to power. And, this is what has really happened in this age of techno-science: 'Modern natural knowledge, both scientific and technical, is information and as such culturally disembedded, which means: differentiated from encompassing moral values, social concerns, and political goals. Obviously knowledge is developed with a view to social, economic or political purpose.'¹⁸

Transformation Required, Not Just Information

Interdisciplinarity is not making much headway despite persistent advocacy of it by many intellectuals around the world. This is mainly because its practice is predominantly governed by the Western techno-science, its alternative is not easy to suggest. However, if one goes deep down into certain other traditions, one could see some way out. In contrast to some other major traditions, for example that of India, the Western tradition puts human beings at the centre of universe and induces them to utilize knowledge merely as an instrument

for establishing domination over nature and others. This whole outlook needs to be we really want to transcend boundaries in a significant and fruitful manner.

Indians traditionally believe that knowledge is not basically concerned with sheer professionalism and power pursuit. Instead it is meant to bring a change in life and in our *Weltanschauung*. Hence, 'the primary concern' in India, 'has always been, not information, but transformation.'¹⁹ Knowledge here transforms into higher wisdom. Accordingly, we have a remarkably different conception of philosophy in India. Indian Philosophy 'is not the mere love of wisdom; it is *sophia*: It is wisdom itself.'²⁰ Jnana yoga or the path of knowledge is also suggestive of this.

Another way in which one can proceed towards transdisciplinarity and transformation has been put forward as the bhakti approach to knowledge:

Spiritual traditions in India believe that knowledge is not for the acquisition of power but serving the world with a spirit of *bhakti*, a spirit of devotion. A *Bhakti* approach to knowledge, which does not discount the contribution that knowledge can make to human empowerment but seeks to provide a transcendent goal of unconditioned moral and ethical obligation of the self to the other is important for breaking our disciplinary boundaries.²¹

Such an approach goes far beyond the concept of knowledge as mere information, and makes knowledge a way of life meant for service to society at large. Thus, 'what we need now is a new ethics of servanthood, and it is easier for those men of knowledge who conceptualize their pursuits as those of a servant to break their disciplinary boundaries than those who think of themselves as masters' (ibid.).

For this much needed transformation, the lessons of Vedanta can be of great help.

Humans and nature, subject and object, self and others—these do not really constitute alien domains, according to Advaita Vedanta. Many Westerners too urge, ‘to recognize that they both form part of a single universe.’²² Hence, the upholders of this view regard the dialogue of civilizations as an essential part of our ventures to transcend disciplinary modes of thought. The questions they raise, in this regard, are not only very pertinent for the present but highly suggestive too: ‘Is there a deeper universalism which goes beyond the formalistic universalism of modern societies and modern thought, one that accepts contradictions within its universality? Can we promote a pluralistic universalism on the analogy of the Indian pantheon wherein a single god has many *avatars*?’ (66).

The Vanaprastha Perspective

More importantly, Indian philosophy is above all a philosophy of life, and one of the crucial questions raised in it is: How is a person to plan his or her life in an ideal way? Any exercise in sheer professionalism cannot provide us a far-reaching solution to this problem. ‘For answering it, man must develop his reflective abilities. He must have time for reflection. But impartial reflection is not possible so long as man is carried away by the needs, duties, and responsibilities of daily life in family and society.’²³

The life of a professional is bound by formal disciplinary training and characterized by appropriate expertise and competence. The main motivation behind professional pursuits is simple enough. It is will to power, prestige, and prosperity that keep professionalism alive and functional. What is important is that such a bounded life can be significant only as a stage of life; it cannot and should not encompass a person’s whole course of life. One has also to

take into account wider social responsibilities and spiritual development. As Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) said, ‘Our age is the age of specialists. Each one knows more and more about less and less. We concentrate on some narrow field and forget the larger context in which we can see the meaning of our own specialism. Modern specialization has led to the fragmentation of knowledge. We should not only be the specialists but also have the sense of the meaning of life and social responsibility.’²⁴

In the ancient Indian tradition, a person’s life was divided into four stages called *ashramas*: *brahmacharya*, the student; *grihastha*, the householder; *vanaprastha*, the forest-dweller; and *sannyasa*, the wandering ascetic. The third of these four stages of human life is particularly relevant for the present because it adds a new perspective to interdisciplinarity. In order to lead a successful household life, one has to earn money for livelihood and achieve power and prestige for social recognition. Hence, the household stage of life and professional career mostly go simultaneously even today. All this, however, is not the end of the story:

The perspective of *vanaprastha* states that after one has accumulated one’s wealth and power one should abandon all these and search for truth. This seems to have an immense enriching suggestion for our task of abandonment at hand. Academic disciplines provide wealth, prestige, and power and acclaim to the practising professionals. But having gained all these through our respective disciplines, at a certain stage, we have to abandon our assuring grounds in order that we are able to discover the unexpected truths of reality in the borderland and wilderness.²⁵

Indian wisdom can play a crucial role in breaking down boundaries and barriers and opening up new horizons. For, the emphasis

here is very much on 'developing spiritual alternatives to the logic of power' (148). That is why, the stage of *vanaprastha* becomes so important as a transformative phase in an individual's life. It provides a person with the time, environment, and the mindset necessary for impartial reflections on what really matters in human life. *Vanaprastha* is 'the stage of self reflection and self-examination';²⁶ it is going beyond all the insularity which has come from self-centeredness.

Many may be critical of the Indian view of interdisciplinarity. Critics may say there is more a pious hope in it than any effective intellectual strategy and that Indians never cared about interdisciplinarity as an autonomous inquiry. In response to this critique, it may be said that Indians do not in fact need to arrive at yet another discipline through the paradigmatic practice of interdisciplinarity. What we as humans really require now is a transformation through liberation from discipline-bound ways of thinking. Thus, from the Indian point of view, 'interdisciplinarity is not an end in itself'; instead, it is 'a means to a process of knowledge that is integral, sensitive to the intellectual challenge of a fast changing human condition, problem-oriented, and capable of creative interaction with reality, and liberating.'²⁷



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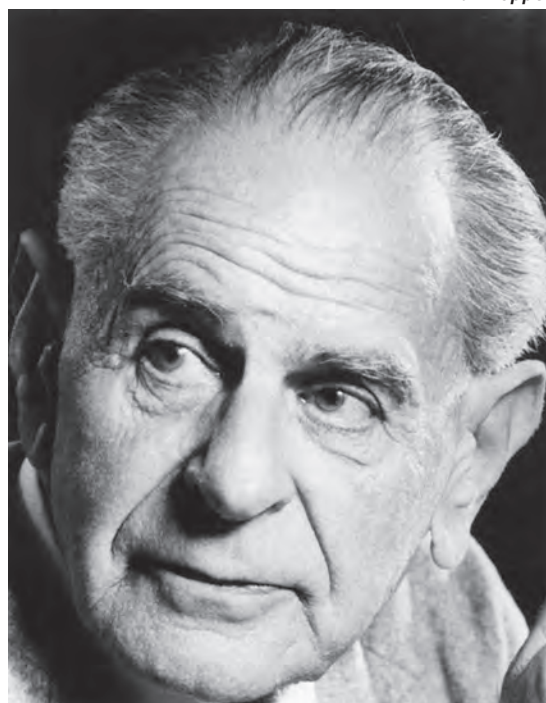
Religious Dimensions of Karl Popper's Philosophy

Joe E Barnhart

DESPITE WORKING CLOSELY with one another and coauthoring a large book on the mind-body issue, philosopher Karl Popper (1902–94) and brain scientist John Eccles (1903–97) disagree on the question of the supernatural. Eccles believes in the survival of the human soul as does Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*. Popper leans towards agnosticism as does the Socrates of Plato's *Apology*. Eccles is a theist, Popper an agnostic and a naturalist, but his understanding of evolution led him not only to be a sustained critic of materialism, but also to provide fertile ground for developing considerable insight into values and virtues deeply rooted in religion. Although the philosopher Virgilius Ferm has discovered at least a hundred definitions of 'religion', we need here only a useful definition that is broadly applicable—from Judaism to Mahayana Buddhism. The definition I choose is a practical research tool. Briefly, religion may be seen as a way of coming to terms with our core-finitude, which quickly makes us conscious of and feel our vulnerability. We are conspicuously finite both physically and mentally. Emotionally we feel and sometimes suffer our vulnerability, and morally we wrestle with our finitude, facing the tragedy of being bound to two rights that cannot both be satisfied. More often, we experience the sting of our moral failures or limitations. When we try to comprehend our situation intellectually, especially in its broader context, we may sense our need for reaching out for help in dealing with the humbling awareness of our many areas of ignorance.

Popper's epistemology and discussion of science's history of conjectures and refutations suggest also severe criticism of theology, although he rarely used the word 'theology' and seldom engaged in 'God talk'. This does not make him hostile to the religious life any more than Fyodor Dostoyevsky's (1821–81) character Ivan Karamazov should be viewed as the novelist's hostility to theism. Dostoyevsky brilliantly shows how dogmatism is a failure to be truthful to one's self—bearing false witness against oneself—to the point of missing out on self-forgiveness. In many ways, *The Brothers Karamazov* sails on the

Karl Popper



rough sea of conjectures-and-refutations-and-more-conjectures. Popper is saying to the institution of science that it maintains its identity as science only by making truthfulness its shining ideal, which entails *aggressively challenging* its dearest hypotheses, perhaps eliminating some in the hope of resurrecting better ones. In Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, Nastasya, a majestic and overwhelming character early in the novel, appears to be something of an *experiment*, her life becoming a test from which she seems to learn too slowly. She cannot bear to be deprived of her guilt, which is largely the result of her dogmatism.

It is noteworthy that some of the great philosophers who were not theists or believers in the supernatural nevertheless wrote books about religion. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), David Hume (1711–76), and John Dewey (1859–1952) apparently felt they could not ignore the subject. Popper wrote no book on religion per se; but in their coauthored book *The Self and Its Brain*, Eccles and he show how fully aware they are that the human species has responded to the shock of core-finitude in diverse ways, from groveling in despair and self-defacement to soaring in grand flights of self-transcendence that purports to connect with the infinite or even become absorbed in the infinite, losing one's identity or becoming so radically another self as to discard most of the traces of frailty and impediments. Most religious traditions, however, while seeking to help us struggle with everyday living, provide some means of making daily life more bearable and even more interesting and enjoyable. A great Christian novelist like Dostoyevsky could write gripping scenes that probe deep into issues of theodicy, giving a compelling voice to theism through the endearing monk Zosima, who seems to function as an understanding therapist throughout the story as he helps his 'clients' deal with their struggles. 'You don't need a martyr's cross when you are not ready

for it,' he says to the erratic Dmitri. 'You wanted to make yourself another man by suffering... such heavy burdens are not for all men.'¹ Indeed, Zosima's critique of some practices of asceticism is effective because he dramatically exposes its pride hidden under the mask of humility. *The Idiot*, with its almost clinical analysis of Myshkin's adventure into the territory of humility, has some striking parallels with Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations*, which articulates his dream of scientific humility. Ironically, Popper's epistemology and philosophy of science, I will attempt to show, have some meaningful implications for our dealing with guilt, truthfulness, and forgiveness.

Humility, Tradition, and Community

In most cases, humility emerges as a virtue when understood as the attempt to see ourselves in a broader perspective. Sickness, suffering our losses and ignorance in so many areas, our encounters with moral quandaries, and the death of our most cherished delusions or most cherished friends and relatives—all these can sometimes be humbling and unnerving to us or cause us to wonder and to reach out for some resolution.

Karl Popper's famous book *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* may be viewed as a venture, not in humiliation, but in honest humility. Even our greatest ideas and theories are conjectures in the sense that there is the possibility that they might eventually be refuted and replaced by possibly better ones. Science is an adventure in humility—discovering new areas in which we discover pockets if not whole arenas of our ignorance. Science in that sense has a deeply religious dimension. Popper respected Einstein's way of seeking ways to test and possibly refute his own intellectual inventions.

Religions have emphasized the 'bonding' of individuals in a community of 'reinforcement,' a word that B F Skinner (1904–90) popularized.

Roger Williams (1603–83), the great proponent of church-state separation, aligned himself with Christian believers in England and New England who called themselves ‘Seekers’, which in many respects is what a scientific or philosophical community is—fellow seekers. From his Jewish heritage Popper, like Einstein, knew that scientists came from a *tradition* of scientists who laboured before them. His critique of verificationism was in part a critique of the naïve assumption that a few or even hundreds of observations could spontaneously generate a viable theory. Scientific theories and observations have grown by intense interaction with one another. Even perceptions are theory laden, and theories are untestable and amorphous without systematic appropriate observations. Common sense presupposes some common consensus as at least a starting point for testing and even possible refutation and replacement with more promising alternatives.

Churches, synagogues, or the equivalent in other religions serve ideally as focal points of mutual enrichment and revision. The Apostle Paul used the analogy of a human body whose various organs supplement each other. A kind of organic humility emerges by each organ’s fulfilling its proper function. Popper understood the work of falsifying hypotheses, or falsifying aspects of hypotheses, as essential to the organic growth of the scientific enterprise. The same may be said of any vital religion devoted to serving the needs of finite mortals rather than the expansive interests of its managerial hierarchy.

Ironically, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity appears to have grown out of the awareness that not even the deity could have a vital life as the eternal Solipsist. Personhood—even the envisioned Divine Person—requires interaction. To be is to be related. Even for the deity, to be is to respond to the other. In *The Self and Its Brain*, Popper and Eccles demonstrate how our

psychological states today interact with World 3, which is composed of such entities as mathematical formulas, musical scores, artistic works, plans, theories, beliefs, in contrast to such World 2 psychological states as believing, hoping, doubting, and feeling pain and pleasure. Interactionism includes interacting also with our physical states, World 1, which includes brain states.

In both *Objective Knowledge* and *Conjectures and Refutations*, Popper’s criticism of logical positivism allows him to defend metaphysics as intellectual advances that can be debated by developing and testing their network of conjectures for coherence, internal consistency, and their function as a backdrop for scientific research. In some ways science is metaphysics becoming more rigorous as its conjectures become not only testable theories for internal consistency, but also falsifiable through offering predictions and expansions subject to public testing. As some of theology’s history shows, religion can generate an abundance of metaphysical images and views that can be discussed rationally even if not tested in a laboratory setting.

From Prophecy to Prediction

Many religions have for centuries wrestled with the ambitions and limitations of prophets and prophecies that may be viewed as either fulfilled or falsified. A careful reading of apocalyptic literature and the branch of theology called theodicy suggests that the history of religious faith has been shadowed by the threat of real or apparent falsification. Much of apocalyptic thought is the desperate attempt to come to terms with falsified visions, hopes, dreams, and prophecies. By distinguishing World 2 and World 1 from World 3, Popper was in effect saying: Let your theories die for you. There are more theories to replace them. Be fruitful intellectually and multiply. There is a kind of epistemological resurrection. Old theories and

conjectures are resurrected in new bodies, that is, in new formulas and hypotheses followed by bold new tests. Like Jacob and other fertile men of the Hebrew Bible, our theories may die, but not before they generate many offspring. The 'seed' of Newton lives. 'Be fruitful and multiply.'

Lying and Bearing False Witness • Religions that help spawn moral guidelines generate community values and virtues that strengthen the bond of community. One of the primary virtues is the strict restraint of lying, including bearing of false witness. Popper understands that the scientific community cannot survive without a persistent control of lying, including penalizing the generation of misinformation and misleading clues.

Despite Apostle Paul's near diatribe against 'the law', he wrote, 'For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."' ² In many respects, it is virtually a religious principle among scientists, philosophers, and scholars to avoid misrepresenting another scholar's position. Presenting the other's position fairly and accurately is at the heart of academia's golden rule. A scholar at a Bertrand Russell conference in Chicago sent Popper a copy of one of my papers that attempted to show how the works of Popper, and by implication his colleague Eccles, can serve therapists and counselors in their work with their clients. Popper sent a letter to thank me for representing him fairly. In some respects my paper was an expression of what in religious circles is referred to as gratitude, for Popper's writings have deeply affected me intellectually, morally, and emotionally. To praise in scholarship and science is to use a colleague's work responsibly. Essential to showing respect and concern for the well-being of one's colleague or neighbour is to exemplify other virtues, for example, not stealing and not coveting. Cultures that have deeply engrained coveting or envy tend to generate distrust, suspicion, and thus the weakening of those

personal and social bonds that make human existence more bearable and fulfilling.

Truthfulness and Objectivity • In *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Karl Popper helps to reinforce truthfulness and objectivity by showing how they can more likely survive, and perhaps even thrive, in an open society. Religions have historically needed to secure territory somewhere between authoritarian dogmatism and what might be called the charismatic profusion and confusions of private revelations or subjective disclosures claiming their own authority. In Galatians and 2 Corinthians, Paul relishes, to the point of almost boasting, the abundance of his revelations, which adds strongly, he believes, to his claim to be an apostle second to none. On the other hand, while writing to the Corinthians, he had to deal with what appears to have become a proliferation of prophetic utterances and speaking in tongues by a charismatic upsurge. The crisis led him to recommend that the prophets speak one by one, listening to one another, so that outside observers would not judge them to be disorderly or perhaps deranged. Those who spoke in tongues were told to have interpreters. Furthermore, Paul instructed the interpreters to see to it that their messages were guided towards admonition, encouragement, the common good, and perhaps even wisdom and consolation.

Falsification, Scientific Humility, and Wonder • In his criticism of logical positivism and its heralded term 'verificationism', Karl Popper helped reintroduce to scientific research a value that traditionally has been associated with religion. To say that we cannot verify our conjectures or theories need not be humiliating, but it is *humbling*. Einstein confessed that his earlier devotion to positivism was one of the most regretted mistakes of his career. According to Einstein's friend Karl Popper, scientists not only may, but should, attempt to make a practice of trying to falsify their conjectures now and then. This practice initially seemed

to be a menace to some scientists; but over the decades it has provided a creative thrust to research and even the language of rational discourse. It is not unusual today to hear lawyers and others refer to evidence as 'consistent with' their assertions or conjectures, for the work of Popper and other epistemologists has made many of us less prone to rush to claim that the evidence *proves* our case. More humility has crept into our discourse, allowing us to see more readily that while a powerful alignment of evidence might well support our case, it might also support another or better case that has not entered our heads. In short, just because we have elected to focus on one compelling conjecture does not mean that there could be no others waiting in the wings to be discovered or invented. Scientists who are dedicated in the very specialized work to which they are committed cannot carry out their calling unless they manifest a certain sustained humility in confessing that they might be wrong about some of their conjectures. Their faith in any conjecture might suffer from growing scepticism. Indeed, Popper's point in opening the falsification issue is that scientists have a duty to try to falsify especially their scientific conjectures. Popper does not contend that it is a religious duty. He does not even use Kant's words to say that the duty should be treated 'as if it was the voice of God'. But the duty is, nevertheless, imperative because science cannot sustain itself with rigour without the commitment to the practice of striving to falsify—to *severely* criticize and even 'shoot down'—their most cherished conjectures and theories. Indeed, this critical component is essential to scientific creativity. Behind this commitment stands a kind of scholarly chorus, like a conscience set to music—reminding us that 'we might be wrong'. Or to be more precise—the *conjecture* might be wrong. Fortunately, Popper and his colleague John Eccles in *The Self and Its Brain* explain how we avoid the feeling of

personal humiliation by clarifying our World 2 psychological states from the state and processes of World 3—the theories, plans, ideas, mathematical formulas, works of art, and numerous conjectures and creations. A 'death' in World 3 need not lead to the death of our finite World 2.

The Open Society

Popper understood that the open society runs risks just as anarchy and the closed society carry their risks. Being 'open' means specifically that a society may enjoy the freedom for many groups—including churches, mosques, and synagogues—to form their own special commitments, each group with its own goals, regulations, and reinforcement networks. Being 'open' means having the option of leaving one group and aligning with another. If individuals are expelled from one group, they are free to join another group or even create for themselves other groups without going 'underground'. Popper strongly supported freedom of religion, including the liberty to align openly with fellow agnostics or atheists if one so wished. The state should not enforce orthodoxy of beliefs or doctrines, although some behaviour are to be forbidden when they violate the ground rules necessary for a free society, a society in which free interaction among individuals can be maximized.

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper notes that the ingredients of *society*, of social interaction, can contribute to and enrich the individual's freedom because individual freedom that is more than an abstraction requires concrete means and reinforcing conditions as well as protection from harm. Individual freedom requires interaction with other individuals and the environment. When they in *The Self and Its Brain* discuss the relationship between the brain, World 1 and the mind—World 2 and World 3—Popper and Eccles refer to their position as 'interactionism'—Worlds 1, 2, and 3 interrelating intimately. In an

open society, the individual discovers the possibility of choosing a wider range of interaction, including learning new styles of interacting. Atheists and Christians, for example, may choose to learn from Hinayana Buddhism certain forms of creative meditation, or learn from Mahayana Buddhism a new appreciation of compassion and empathy. Indeed, in many ways empathy is the outreach of the golden rule, which among scholars and scientists entails treating others' views as one would want one's own views treated and represented. The science of anthropology in particular stresses the art and discipline of stepping respectfully *inside* another culture and society for the purpose of learning how individuals of a foreign culture not only feel, but also think and behave—to think as 'the other' thinks and to perceive as 'the other' perceives. This is why in the academic world such empathy—seeking vicarious identity with the other—is a *discipline*. It requires work and dedicated study and *sensitivity* of inquiry. Profound disagreement implies first *careful* understanding of the other's point of view, World 3 and the other person as a person, an interplay of Worlds 1, 2, and 3. To love the enemy and to love your neighbour as yourself may require seeking to understand and having at least a temporary *vicarious identity* with the enemy or neighbour, discovering him or her to be not a mere object, World 1, but also, like one's own self, an entire system and interplay of Worlds 1, 2, and 3.

I suggest that the apostle Paul's struggle with the law—including the Torah and the oral law—was his own discovery of the *process* by which each new avenue of freedom and insight must develop new regulations to prevent freedom from veering off into chaos or self-destruction. Even his reputed revelations from the third heaven required earthly *interpretations*. Not even the apostle could determine whether his celestial journey to paradise and the third heaven was 'in the body' or 'out of the

body'. He was struggling with freedom's newly emerging cosmos to avoid chaos, as Galatians 5:19–21 indicates. Popper's insights can help religious leaders see that understanding rather than misunderstanding is more than a feeling. Empathy also requires cognitive discipline for venturing inside another's World 3 point of view. Paul and Peter might have more successfully reduced their animosity had they devoted more time to understanding better their respective positions and goals in striving to resolve the heated conflict between certain Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians in Antioch and elsewhere. In Acts 10, the author provides Peter his own private interview with the heavenly Jesus or at least the voice of Jesus along with a picnic blanket covered with food that would perhaps satisfy Paul.

Forgiveness and Atonement

At or near the center of most religions stands the theme of forgiveness and with it atonement, redemption, and reconciliation. Central to Popper's epistemology and philosophy of science, which transfers smoothly into rational psychology and practical therapy, stands his principle of correcting our mistakes as quickly as possible. To be the recipient of forgiveness requires being sufficiently truthful to recognize certain kinds of mistakes. Not all our mistakes are moral failures, but those made either deliberately or by carelessness—not taking moral care—and insensitivity that result in harm or disparagement of another person might become candidates for forgiveness. Like the falsification of a claim or prediction, a moral failure is a failure to measure up to reasonably expected standards or goals of achievement. In human relationships, commitments entail living up to the standards without which the social bonds would never materialize because commitments are major ingredients of the social bond.

To correct our mistakes entails making the appropriate changes. In some cases, however, our moral failures may be such that any restitution of the loss would be impossible. Any hope of making an adequate compensation would be out of the question. If someone kills my brother, what could possibly compensate for the loss? No amount of activity that the perpetrator engages in under the rubric of penance could come even close to counting as compensation. The word 'compensate' suggests making up for or counterbalancing. Something is offered to offset the damage, harm, or loss. To make amends is to offer payments or satisfactions for the injury or loss. But in some fundamental sense the very idea of either atonement or compensation for certain harms seems not only inappropriate, but also a manifestation of either insensitivity or an innocent failure to grasp the depth of the harm or loss.

Having taught from several of Popper's books and articles for thirty years while teaching courses in religion studies, and after only one long but meaningful conversation alone with him as a guest in his home, I wish now to risk offering what I hope will be perhaps an insight on the question of atonement. I cannot pretend to know Popper's explicit view. I will offer basically what I think is a position on this vital issue that is utterly vital to the major religions and to many other religions from antiquity until current times. This view reflects what I believe is implied in Popper's writings, although I want to emphasize that it is my own conjecture as best as I can formulate.

First of all, although an agnostic, Popper readily acknowledges that the doctrine of a creator or God can count as a genuine metaphysical theory. Some of the claims inside this rather sweeping theory can be articulated to the point of comparing them with one another in order to test them for consistency and internal coherence. Claims that purport to extend into the publicly

observable realm may, of course, be appropriately criticized and seen as perhaps falsifiable.

Second, thanks to his very close work with his colleague John Eccles, who is a Christian, Karl Popper has given considerable thought to various religious and moral issues. This is not to say that he has delved into theology. Nevertheless, since his friend Einstein sometimes spoke in theological terms, Popper in a private conversation with him at Paul Oppenheim's (1885–1977) house expressed his own view of indeterminism as follows: 'If God had wanted to put everything into the world from the beginning, He would have created a universe without change, without organisms and evolution, and without man and man's experience of change. But He seems to have thought that a live universe with events unexpected even by Himself would be more interesting than a dead one.'³ Popper's metaphysical view may be described as 'process philosophy' rather than 'process theology'. Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) and E S Brightman (1884–1953) are process philosophers who are theists, while Popper is a naturalist. Despite the differences, the three philosophers have very much in common, each being an indeterminist and having a strong commitment to the theory of evolution. Indeed, their views of personhood seem strikingly similar, Brightman being a personalist, and Hartshorne's view very close to Brightman's, as their correspondence shows. The point here is that while Popper has no explicit theological views, focused attempts to interface his version of process philosophy with Brightman's and Hartshorne's prove to be quite fruitful in gaining insight into his deep and abiding religious concerns.

For example, in understanding forgiveness in light of their process philosophy, I find Popper's detailed concentration on learning from mistakes and errors exceedingly helpful in also understanding redemption, a term critical to

most religions. In *Learning from Error: Karl Popper's Psychology of Learning*, William Berkson and John Wettersten note that 'at crucial points, Popper always refers to problems because he actually *is* interested in the psychology of the invention of solutions, and because his theory was, in the first place, a psychological one.'⁴ While Popper does not believe in the traditional doctrine of original sin, it is accurate to say that he does believe in what might be called 'original ignorance' and 'original flaws' because our species is not only finite and vulnerable—like all other animals—but also terribly *conscious* of its finitude and even suffers the awareness of that finitude. Far from leaving us, this awareness tends to increase after we reach adulthood because we better understand our weaknesses. We can *imagine* future situations that can make us feel both powerful and vulnerable in new ways. In the moral realm, socialized individuals can become keenly aware of their moral failures and weaknesses. Pressure mounts for forgiveness and a realistic chance for acceptance, restoration, and redemption.

With Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Popper stood in wonder at the starry sky above and the moral law within. While his attack on materialism's program of reductionism is relentless, he argues also that panpsychism is too reductionistic. As an evolutionist, he agrees with Whitehead that the universe appears to be, not a collection of things, but an interacting set of events and processes. Although Popper does not believe that a Creator outside the universe exists, he conjectures that 'the universe, or its evolution, is creative, and that the evolution of sentient animals with conscious experiences has brought about something new ... With the emergence of man, the creativity of the universe has, I think, become obvious. The human species has "created a new objective world, the world of the products of the human mind; a world of myths, of fairy tales and

scientific theories, of poetry and art and music.' He calls it 'World 3,' in contradistinction to World 1 and the subjective or psychological World 2.⁵ With Jacques Monod (1910–76), Popper thinks that 'creative' implies a backdrop of 'unpredictability'. Charles Hartshorne is a philosopher whose metaphysics stands very close to Popper's in many, many details. Charles Hartshorne, a masterful proponent of panentheism, incorporates a great deal of A N Whitehead (1861–1947) and C S Peirce's (1839–1914) metaphysics. Hartshorne believes that the universe is to God as the human body is to the human mind. That is, God is perpetually incarnate in his universe and interacting with it. Indeed, in a discussion with several philosophers at a meeting in Texas, I heard Hartshorne say that the emergence of the human species might have surprised God, which was Hartshorne's way of stressing that unpredictability, is a major aspect of the reality, including the thinking *process*. Popper does not hold on to a Supreme Consciousness, but, like Whitehead and Hartshorne, he does appear to regard creativity to be a major category or possibly the greatest category of reality.⁶

(To be continued)

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Perceiving Other Religions

Åke Sander

IN TODAY'S INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED¹, multicultural and multi-religious societies,² persons that choose to embrace a particular religious faith, as opposed to atheism or agnosticism, will be increasingly called upon to answer the following question: How should we as religious adherents conduct ourselves towards those of different faiths?

When stated in slightly more concrete and elaborate terms, the question becomes: How should we as Christians or Hindus or Muslims, for example, think about the theoretical and practical content of other faiths and conduct ourselves towards those that follow them? What are our options in this regard? And among these, are there any that are preferable and why?

Let me emphasize at the outset that this short paper in no way aims to provide a comprehensive treatment of such a subtle, multilayered, and complex question; indeed a project of this sort would require the length of an entire book. Nor does it intend to offer definitive answers to this or any other relevant question. Rather it sets for itself the more modest task of sketching out a way of thinking about the 'religious other' that seems at least worth pondering within the framework of a modern multi-religious milieu. In the end, it is the responsibility of each and every individual who adheres to a religious faith to answer this question for her or himself.

Background

A primary characteristic of our postmodern times is the increasingly obvious presence of a

diversity of competing belief- and value-systems. The point here being that in an ever-globalizing world, more and more people in more and more places are confronted with individuals from cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions that differ from their own, thus forcing them to react to unfamiliar or even contrary beliefs, values, customs, rituals, and manners. This is occurring not only in our ordinary social life-world due to increased international travel and global migration,³ but also in the virtual worlds of international television and the Internet, which includes such features as YouTube, blogs, Facebook, tweets, and so forth. All in all, this development has led to an unprecedented increase of interaction between people with different religions, ideologies, lifestyles, and the like.

In short, globalization has fundamentally transformed the nature of most communities in the world, which up to about fifty years ago had been fairly homogeneous in terms of their basic thought, norm, and value systems—a homogeneity that in many cases had been based on their respective religious traditions. Up to that time, most people unreflectively and unquestioningly accepted as a given the life-world they had been presented within the course of their primary socialization. This will be discussed in a bit more detail in the last section of this paper. Over the last several decades, however, more and more aspects of our identity, patterns of interpretation, and life-world have become a matter of individual choice. According to thinkers such as Peter Berger (b.1929), the process leading from 'faith to choice'⁴ has now reached a point at which

people are not merely *allowed* to choose, but are more or less *forced* to do so—a circumstance often referred to as the ‘postmodern condition’. In this regard, Berger has noted⁵ that especially for those who value continuity, stability, and predictability, the postmodern condition—with its existential angst and crisis of meaning—can be an extremely difficult, almost intolerable, state of affairs, and thus one that enhances the appeal of religious and other movements promising certainty and the continuance of traditional ways of life.

What are Our Options?

Given this situation, how should we, as human beings, conduct ourselves? How should we proceed when it comes to choosing our world view, pattern of interpretation, or however we want to term the largely unconscious conceptual structure through which we select, organize, constitute, and perceive our life-world, and make sense of our existence within it?⁶

What options are at our disposal and what consequences do these have for our relationships with other people, our attitudes towards their beliefs and actions, and our ways of dealing with them? Put in slightly more elaborate and personal terms: how should I respond to the discovery that there are large numbers of persons that do not accept my most basic beliefs, values, and convictions—for example, my religious convictions? And what does it mean to adopt a ‘rational attitude or standpoint’ in such a situation? What is the reasonable and sensible thing to do?

- Totally abandon my ‘old’ system of beliefs and convictions?
- Change my convictions or the way I hold them,⁷ arguing that they are not very important so as to tone down or totally disregard the conflict?

- Convince the others that my convictions and beliefs are better than theirs and thus should be preferred, even by them, that is, try to change their minds?
- Strive for harmony or consensus by reinterpreting my own religious beliefs in a way that avoids contradictions and conflicts with the others?
- Are there other alternatives that have yet to be mentioned?

In keeping with the more limited and modest goal mentioned at the beginning of this paper, my attempt in what follows is not to develop a comprehensive treatment of the questions thus far raised, for which there are no easy answers. Rather my attempt will be to share some thoughts and offer a few suggestions concerning how we might derive a ‘reasonable, intellectually honest’ answer to our primary question, which can be rephrased as follows: what can it mean to take responsibility for one’s religious beliefs within the framework of a religiously plural situation?

The first thing to note in this regard is that this question consists of two slightly different components. How should the adherents of a specific religious tradition relate to and/or conduct themselves towards 1) the specific *beliefs and confessions* of different religious traditions, as well as the rituals and other ‘practical’ consequences that follow more directly from those beliefs; and, 2) the *adherents* themselves.

The first component has an *epistemological* focus in that it concerns the attitude a religious adherent adopts towards the *content* of different religions—their beliefs about various empirical and trans-empirical entities, their ethical guidelines, their rites, their mythologies, and so forth. The second component has an *ethical*, and more practical, focus in that it concerns the attitude and behaviour that a religious adherent

adopts towards those that adhere to, believe in, and live according to a different religious tradition—regardless of the value he or she places upon that tradition.

In other words, it is important to distinguish between our *epistemological* and *ethical* relation with other religious traditions and their adherents. The primary focus of this paper will be on the first of these relations, while the second will be only briefly addressed.⁸

Are There More or Less 'Rational' Attitudes to Choose From?

In addressing the matter of a religious adherent's attitude towards the 'content' of different religious belief systems, the first order of business is to delineate the possible alternatives. Which attitudes are available to choose from? The second order of business is to attempt to discuss which of these alternative attitudes might be 'better' to adopt for one who is at least pretending to be interested in making the most 'rational and intellectually honest' choice possible.

As I see it, the total number of attitudinal options appears to be quite limited. We can begin by attempting to delineate these and then narrow them down according to my own estimate of their degree of 'reasonableness,' an approach that at least begins to address the question of which might be 'better' than others.

We should note here that the attempt to determine the 'reasonableness' of various attitudes towards other religions presupposes that we have already come to terms with the more general and very thorny question of what it means to be a rational, intellectually honest person to begin with. In the context of this paper, the question could be posed as follows: What does it mean to take responsibility for one's religious faith? In this regard, we will briefly present some closing thoughts on the meaning of

rationality and what criteria might be used to measure the reasonableness of a conviction, a belief, and so forth. Most of my examples will be drawn from relations between Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism since these three traditions have experienced major macro, meso, and micro inter-relational tensions and conflicts for long periods of time.⁹

The question of 'religious conflict' and 'relations between the Christian and the Islamic faiths' has been addressed by numerous academics from a variety of disciplines such as history of religion, sociology, psychology, political science, and so forth. The focus of this paper will be on the more philosophical aspects of the question—among other things, the focus will be on the individual, existential, and micro perspective. Thus our point of departure will be the specific situation of individual persons and how we should believe, think about, and by extension, behave towards those that adhere to what we might consider to be foreign, unusual, or discomforting religious traditions, world views, beliefs, interpretive patterns, and so forth.

Possible Attitudes: Six Basic Alternatives

Of the possible attitudes that can be adopted when the adherents¹⁰ of one religious tradition come into contact with those of another religious tradition, I will here delineate six alternatives. After briefly presenting these alternatives, I will discuss some of the rationality criteria that, in my view, ought to be applied when one is confronted by other world views or patterns of interpretation. This will hopefully lead to a better, if highly tentative, understanding of what it might mean for a religious person to take responsibility for his/her own faith and beliefs.

I begin this section by reiterating that there are only a limited number of reasonable

alternatives when it comes to deciding how we should relate to the content and adherents of religious traditions that differ from our own. At least in terms of my own analysis, the following six seem to be the most basic choices:

1. To abandon my own religious tradition/faith, or sub-tradition, in favour of the religious tradition/faith of the other;
2. To completely forsake adherence to any religious traditions;
3. To tightly maintain adherence to my original tradition, considering it to be *the only* true, correct, and right faith, with all others being utterly false and mistaken;
4. To more loosely maintain adherence to my original tradition, considering it to be only *more* true, correct, and right than the others, which are viewed as being *more or less* false and mistaken;
5. To consider all religious traditions—including my own—to be equally true, correct, and right, at least on a ‘deeper level’, but to maintain adherence to my original tradition/faith nonetheless;¹¹ and,
6. To suspend my judgement for the time being and abstain from taking a stand relative to the above five options.

An obvious question in this regard is how one religious tradition can be considered *right* or *true*, or more right and true¹² than any other. What do we, can, or ought mean by ‘right’ or ‘true’ when it comes to the types of statements that are common within religions? This, of course, is a question that can only be pursued in a more lengthy and comprehensive treatment of the subject; my point thus far is merely that I consider the above six alternatives to be the main ones at our disposal when we encounter people of other religious traditions.

At this juncture most readers will likely point out that there is at least one other alternative

that I have failed to mention, namely, to create a new hybridized religious tradition by retaining certain elements of my original tradition and combining these with certain elements of one or several of the other traditions/faiths that I encounter—possibly even including elements of my own invention.

While acknowledging this option, I do not intend to pursue it here as this would lead us into the vast realm of religious change, New Age and New Religious Movements, thus taking us far beyond the scope of this paper. What can be said here is that from both a historical and an empirical perspective, this alternative seems to have been rather common. Religious traditions have encountered and influenced each other throughout history; perhaps even more importantly, rather than being fixed, static, and wholly unalterable entities, they have always adapted to changing social, political, and economic circumstances, and transformed accordingly. In metaphorical terms, they are more like flowing, meandering rivers than like monuments. Religious traditions, in other words, are not stone carvings passed from hand to hand throughout the ages; they are malleable spheres of faith—ongoing projects of adaptation to the time, place, and circumstances in which they operate. Expressed more sociologically, religious traditions are primarily a dependent variable in the flow of historic change.

Returning to the topic at hand, let us begin by pointing out one obvious but important prerequisite for the whole discussion about encounters between religions: one can identify and confront *another* religious tradition or sub-tradition *only if* there are identifiable *differences* between one’s own tradition and the one being encountered. If no such differences exist, how could there be an encounter with another faith? Making determinations regarding

what is and is not a *different* tradition, however, can be quite problematic since each religious tradition comes in a variety of forms and expressions. How large a difference must there be, and in what dimension of 'religion'—belief system, mythology, ritual, and so forth—before¹³ we can claim that the tradition we are encountering is factually different, and not merely a variation of our own? Many Christians, for example, are inclined to include among their ranks all those who believe that Jesus is their saviour, while others are determined to insist that only those who believe in their sometimes very obscure, specific, and 'fundamentalist' sub-tradition are the 'true' Christians, while all other so-called Christians are actually 'heretics' headed straight for hell.

It has been argued, on the other hand, that a more appropriate method of distinguishing one way of being religious from another concerns not the 'substance' of an adherent's beliefs, that is which propositions describing 'religious' states of affairs are held to be true, but rather 'the manner in which' those beliefs are embraced or the religious orientation that is preferred. In accordance with this approach, for example, one could claim that 'orthodox, fundamentalist, literalist' Christians have more in common with their likewise 'orthodox, fundamentalist, literalist' Muslim counterparts than they do with Christians who embrace their tradition in a more open-minded, flexible, and quest-oriented way.¹⁴

While this brief discussion touches upon the importance of distinguishing between *intra*- and *inter*-religious differences, the focus of what follows will be exclusively trained upon the latter. However, most of the points that will be made are applicable to *intra-religious differences* as well.¹⁵

(To be continued)

Notes and References

1. This paper was originally delivered as a conference lecture at the department of Philosophy and Religion, Banaras Hindu University, and has been only tolerably adapted to a written format. This explains its relative lack of references.
2. We can here only point out the more important sociological markers or sub-processes that are often identified with globalization: a) individualization; b) privatization; c) relativization; d) de-differentiation; e) diversification of lifestyles and identities; f) ideological, ethnic, religious, social, and geographic mobility—mass migration and diasporization; g) loss of the power of traditional authorities; and h) technological innovations such as the Internet and other forms of electronic communication, socializing, and interactivity. The effects of globalization and post-modernization that are of particular interest here concern their ability to breed individualism, relativization, doubt, and choice.
3. Today's worldwide total of foreign migrants stands at an estimated 214 million, up from 76 million in 1960 and 150 million in 2000.
4. See P Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, (New York: Anchor, 1980), 28.
5. See P Berger, 'The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview' in *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. P Berger (Washington: Eerdmans, 1999).
6. This determinant of our thought and knowledge—the 'mental' structures through which we constitute our specific understanding of ourselves, the world and our place and role in it—has many names, for example: *Weltanschauung*, definition of reality, preconception or *Vorverständnis*, belief/dis-belief system, pattern of interpretation, *habitus* and the like. Pierre Bourdieu in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977), 82–3, describes this as a 'system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, function at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to the analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly

- shaped problems'. For reasons described in Å Sander, 'Religion som förståelse i mötet mellan invandrare och olika typer av vårdpersonal' in *C M Interkulturell psykologi—migration och kulturmöten i Sverige* eds., Allwood and E Franzen (Stockholm: Natur and Kultur, 2000), 282–319 and Å Sander, *En Tro—En Livsvärld—En fenomenologisk undersökning av religiös erfarenhet, religiöst medvetande och deras roller i livsvärldskonstitutionen*, 1/2, Filosofiska Meddelanden, Röda Serien Nr. 27, (Göteborg: Institutionen för filosofi, Göteborgs universitet, 1988), I will use the term 'pattern of interpretation'.
7. Here we are touching upon the important and intricate problem of the different ways that people can hold or be committed to various beliefs and convictions—the so-called religious orientation problem in Religious Studies—a problem that social and other types of psychologists have extensively written about, but there is no room to discuss it here. See *The Authoritarian Personality*, ed. T W Adorno (New York: Harper, 1950); G W Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1960); M Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1960); and C D Batson, P Schoenrade, and W L Ventis, *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (New York: Oxford University, 1993).
 8. Another socio-psychologically important and interesting question concerns how to understand the relation between one's beliefs and evaluations on the one hand and one's willingness (or ability) to either verbally or physically act upon those beliefs and evaluations on the other. For example, should not acting towards other people in accordance with one's belief and value system be viewed as desirable or undesirable from a religious, psychological or any other point of view? In terms of this paper, the question specifically relates to other peoples' *religious* beliefs and behaviours.
 9. For relations between Christianity and Islam, see Å Sander, 'Islam and the West: Their View of Each Other and The Possibilities for Dialogue', *Avrasya Diyalog*, Istanbul, 2010; for relations between Hinduism and Islam, see A Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, Yale University, 2002) and W Berenschot, *Riot politics: Hindu-Muslim Violence and The Indian State* (London: Hurst, 2011).
 10. The matter of what it is to adhere to, belong to, embrace, or be a follower of a religious tradition—especially in terms of its more general formulation: What it is to be religious—is a much-discussed question that I cannot enter into here. I will only say that when using the phrase 'adhere to a tradition' in this paper, I presuppose that it is not only in a purely cultural way, but that the tradition—with its beliefs, rituals, and so forth—is of reasonable importance to the person and how (s)he constitutes her/his life-world and actually lives her/his life.
 11. A strong proponent of this alternative is John Hick. See John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to The Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale, 1989).
 12. The problems connected with the question of whether 'truth' is a property that can exist in different degrees or whether it is a so-called 'flat concept' cannot be entered into here. Suffice it to say that I believe there are ways in which one can meaningfully speak about beliefs and the like, as being more or less true.
 13. See N Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (Glasgow: Collins, 1977) and Å Sander, *En Tro—En Livsvärld*.
 14. The general problem about what constitutes differences and resemblances within the world of religion/religiosity is a thorny and much discussed one that cannot be entered into here. I will only say that I belong to the 'anti-essentialists' in this matter, and am therefore very sceptical of the usefulness of broad terms like Christianity, Hinduism, and so forth, as well as the resulting tendency to describe the religious map of the world in terms of 'World Religions' and the like. Unfortunately, in many contexts, such as this one, it is almost impossible to avoid this type of categorization.
 15. Both can give, and have given, rise to serious problems. In the Muslim world, for example, it is likely that more blood has been spilled over *intra*-religious conflicts than over *inter*-religious ones.

Swami Sachchidananda of Bhavnagar

Dr Shyamali Chowdhury

INDIA HAS AN AGE-OLD TRADITION of following the four stages of life, also called ashramas—*brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *vanaprastha*, and *sannyasa*. Many of the devout followers of this tradition spent a quarter of their average hundred years of life in each of these stages as prescribed by the Vedic scriptures. Till the recent past many lived, who more or less practised this tradition. In this article, we shall explore the life of one such great personality, whose monastic name, Swami Sachchidananda, coincidentally was also used by Swami Vivekananda during his early wandering days.

Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza, whom Max Müller called simply ‘Gauri-samkara’ because of their friendly relationship.¹ He was the Dewan of Bhavnagar State in Kathiawar, Gujarat, India from 1857 to 1879. Well-known and highly respected for his keen statesmanship, he was born on 21 August 1805 and died at the age of eighty-seven in December 1892.²

Bhavnagar is now the fifth largest city in the state of Gujarat, India, situated 198 km away from the state capital Gandhinagar and to the west of the Gulf of Khambhat. It was founded in 1724 by Bhavsinhji Gohil (1703–64) and was the capital of Bhavnagar State, which was a princely state. Before the partition of India in 1947, there existed 565 princely states, which were not part of British India as they had not been conquered by the British, but were subject to subsidiary alliances. Bhavnagar was the first princely state to merge into the Indian Union in 1948. Now it is the cultural capital of the Saurashtra region of Gujarat.

A f t e r the death of Bhavsinhji, the state had many rulers, but the one who has possibly left the most lasting contribution is Maharaja Takhtsinhji (1856–96).

When his father Jaswantsinhji passed away on 11 April 1870, he was only fourteen years old. Hence the British Government imposed a joint administration on the state. This joint administration of one British and one Indian administrator continued from 1870 till 1877, the time when Takhtsinhji became twenty years old. During this period the state was represented by its legendary Dewan Gaurishankar Udayshankar Oza, the Indian administrator.

Gaurishankar was born in a Brahmin family from Ghogha, also known as Gogo, a seaport town about ten miles from Bhavnagar. He probably did not pass the Indian Civil Service Examination, yet he was an excellent civil servant. He was a combination of thinker, doer, meditative, and active person. He proved himself a friend of the needy and the helpless, of the genius struggling to rise, and made an ever-widening circle of friends, relations, and admirers. During the joint administration of the state, Dewan Gaurishankar



Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza



Map of the Bhavnagar State

Oza with the help of Mr E H Percival of the Bombay Civil Service was chiefly responsible for some notable reforms in the areas of administration, revenue collection, judiciary, postal and telegraph services, economic policy, and modernization of the ports. He helped establish the Rajkumar College at Rajkot, for the education of native princes, and also the Rajasthanik High Court of Justice, medical dispensaries, and an enormous hospital, a large reservoir—Gaurishankar Lake or ‘Bor Talav’—to supply water to the town. In the 1850s, Oza started vernacular schools in Bhavnagar city, Mahuva, and key areas across the state.³ Gujarat’s princely states had been opposing the British monopoly over salt since 1878. Oza managed to get support from none other than Dadabhai Naoroji who agreed with the stance taken by Bhavnagar.⁴ He started the first school for girls in Bhavnagar in 1857.⁵ The Bhavnagar State began construction of a network of railway lines over the peninsula of Kathiawar. The British Government acknowledged Gaurishankar’s many services and

conferred upon him the distinction of Order of the Star of India (CSI) in 1877.

In January 1879, Gaurishankar resigned from the post of the Dewan, retired into private life, and devoted himself to the study of Vedanta. He was convinced of the impermanence and unreality of official work, and that above all work was a higher life, which alone was worth living. He then devoted his time to a serious study of Sanskrit and the scriptures. In 1884 he published ‘Svarupanusandhana’ in Sanskrit, which contained ‘considerations on the nature of Atmā (Self) and on the unity of Atmā with Paramātmā (the Highest Self).’⁶ This book with its copious Sanskrit quotations and their translations was edited by Javerilal Umiashankara Yajnika with prefaces in English and Gujarati. Max Müller wrote a letter of hearty praise:

Oxford, December 3, 1884

I have to thank you for your kind letter and for your valuable present, the Svarūpānusandhāna. If you had sent me a real necklace of precious stones it might have been called a magnificent present, but it would not have benefited myself, my true Ātman. The necklace of precious sentences which you have sent me has, however, benefited myself, my true Atman, and I therefore, consider it a far more precious present than mere stones and pearls. Besides, in accepting it, I need not be ashamed, for they become only my own, if I deserve them, that is, if I truly understand them. While we are still in our first and second Āsrama (station of life) we cannot help differing from one another according to the country in which we are born, according to the language we speak, and according to the Dharma (religion) in which we have been educated.⁷

Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza remained in touch with the outer world, though no longer affected by any of the matters of the state administration which had kept him occupied for so many

years. His presence had attracted many itinerant hermits, eminent teachers, and students of Vedanta to Bhavnagar, which became for a time the home of Indian philosophical discussions.

In 1887 he put on the robe of the sannyasin or ascetic, the fourth stage, according to the Hindu scriptures, and in this manner passed the remainder of his life, each day studying and contemplating on Vedanta for hours. He took the monastic name of Swami Sachchidananda Saraswati.

Max Müller wrote about his friend, 'I heard no more of him except indirectly, when his son sent me a copy of the Bhagavad-gītā as a present from his father, who was no longer Gaurisankara then, but Sakkidānanda, that is, the Supreme Spirit, i.e. he "who is, who perceives, and is blessed"' (259).

Swami Sachchidananda, revered by all classes, died in December 1892.⁸ He was popular in the neighbouring regions of Gujarat and also in other states. Maharaja Ajit Singh of Khetri had correspondence with Swami Sachchidananda of Bhavnagar and probably they had a common platform of discussion on Vedantic and other

scriptures. Maharaja Ajit Singh invited him to the celebrations of the birth of his son Rajkumar Jaisingh, who was born on 26 January 1893. On 31 March 1893, Vajeshankar Gaurishankar Oza, son of Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza, from Bhavnagar, replied on behalf of his late father sending good wishes for the newly born prince:

Bhavnagar
31 March 1893

Your Highness

I have recently learnt with great joy from a letter from Pandit Gopinathji the happiest and most welcome news of the birth of a son and heir to your Highness.

I am unable to express in writing the great joy I have felt in reading the gladsome news, my heart is just now bursting with great joy.

I had not had the good fortune of paying to your Highness my respects respects [*sic*] personally yet the great joy I used to take when I read your Highness' profound and learned epistles to my revered father, venerable Swamiji Shri Sacchidanandaji.

The great g [*sic*] trouble and leisure your Highness devotes to the study of Vedantic Philosophy in the midst of the great troubles and cares of the state is most praiseworthy.

May the Almighty Creator give the young Prince a very long life and a glorious and a prosperous career, and may he be the ornament to the glorious family of Kings to which he has been born.

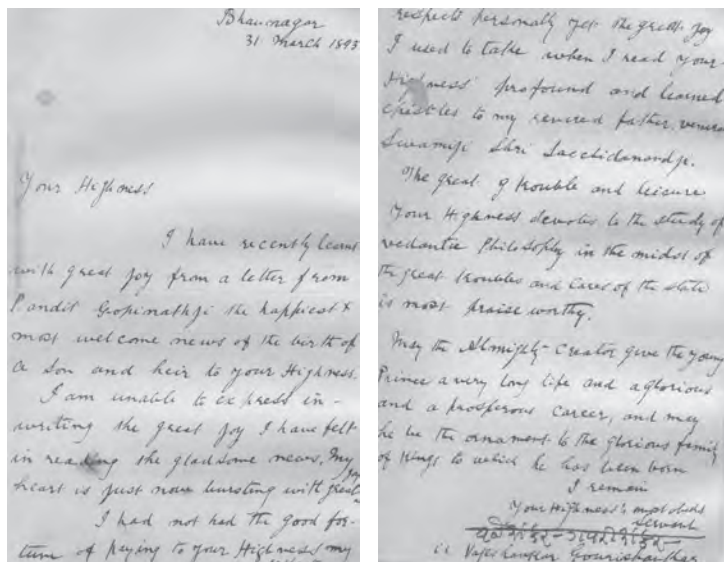
I remain

Your Highness' most obedient servant

Vajeshankar Gourishankar⁹

In his wandering days as an itinerant monk Swami Vivekananda entered Gujarat from Rajputana

Facsimile of Vajeshankar Gaurishankar Oza's letter to the Raja of Khetri



during the middle of December 1891. He reached Ajmer on 13 November 1891 and remained in Ajmer from 13 to 25 November and then went to Beawar. Shyamji Krishna Varma brought the Swami back to Ajmer and he stayed with Shyamji Krishna Varma in his bungalow for fourteen-fifteen days.¹⁰

During his wanderings, Swami Trigunatitananda met Swami Akhandananda in Pushkar and they both came to Ajmer during December 1891.⁸ Swami Akhandananda was in search of Swami Vivekananda after he returned to Jaipur from Etawah at the end of October or early November 1891. From Sardar Chatur Singh at Gopinathji's temple of Jaipur he got the information about Swamiji. But because of Swami Trigunatitananda's illness in Ajmer, when Swami Akhandananda came to Beawar after two weeks of searching for Swami Vivekananda, he had already gone back to Ajmer. Returning to Ajmer, Swami Akhandananda heard that Swamiji had already left.¹¹

In 1881, the Rajputana State Railway, later called the Rajputana Malwa Railway, joined hands with Bombay, Baroda, and Central India Railway by opening a meter gauge line from Delhi to Bombay via Ajmer and Ahmedabad with Mt Abu Road as a halting station and it may be assumed that Swami Vivekananda travelled by that train from Ajmer to Ahmedabad that ran a long stretch of 305 miles.

Swami Vivekananda was wandering in Gujarat and probably arrived at Bhavnagar during the last days of 1891 or early days of 1892. Probably this time, Swamiji visited Bhavnagar and Sihor on the way to Junagadh from Limbdi and he probably had an introduction letter to the Maharaja of Bhavnagar from Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. Swamiji might have spent quality time in discussion with Sir Raol Takhtsinhji, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar from whom he got a letter of introduction to the Maharaja of Kolhapur. The

Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Sir Takhtsinhji was one of the most enlightened and progressive rulers in India. It is reasonable to assume that as Swami Sachchidananda of Bhavnagar was there at that time; Swamiji must have met him and had discussions on Vedanta, though no record of their meeting is available.

After returning from the West Swamiji sent his two brother-disciples, Swami Turiyananda and Swami Saradananda to Gujarat to preach and collect funds. Both of them spent about three months in Gujarat, from 22 February to 18 April 1899. At Bhavnagar they received a telegram from Swamiji to return immediately as his health had deteriorated.¹²

Swami Vivekananda assumed the name Swami Sachchidananda during a part of his wandering days in Goa, Bombay, Madras, and some parts of Gujarat. So it has created confusion among some students of the life of Swami Vivekananda, that the monk who was popularly known as Sachchidananda in Gujarat, was Swami Vivekananda. But the incidents show that this monk was Swami Sachchidananda or Gaurishankar Oza of Bhavnagar. This name is quite common among wandering monks in India.


From the diary of Justice Har Bilas Sarda it is confirmed that Swami Vivekananda entered Gujarat not before the end of December 1891. Swamiji was using the name 'Swami Vividishananda' till he met Raja Ajit Singh of Khetri.



Swami Sachchidananda Saraswati

Sometime in 1891, at his request Swamiji adopted the name 'Vivekananda'. Thereafter he began to use it, and did so throughout his Gujarat sojourn, as is evident from his several letters addressed to Sri Haridas Viharidas Desai and also from the diaries of Justice Har Bilas Sarda and Raja Jasvant Singh of Limbdi. So, we can be almost sure that from Ajmer to Mahabaleshwar Swamiji used the name 'Vivekananda'.

Swamiji set out to travel the Western part of India alone and incognito, but while he was in Gujarat, three of his brother-disciples chanced upon him: Swami Trigunatitananda at Porbandar, Swami Abhedananda at Girnar, and Swami Akhandananda in Kutch. Probably in order to avoid his acquaintances and remain alone, while leaving Gujarat and a little later than that Swamiji used the name 'Sachchidananda'. The first documentary evidence of this name is found in his correspondence with Haripada Mitra of Belgaum and his friends and disciples of Madras.¹³ Therefore he probably used this name only in southern India, Bombay, Pune, and Goa.

In sum, Swami Sachchidananda was a famous person from Bhavnagar. Though Swami Vivekananda used that name for some time,¹⁴ he was not so popular then and any reference to that name without any description in any official records of Gujarat would naturally point to Sri Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza and not to Swami Vivekananda. 

References

1. See 'A Prime Minister and a Child Wife' in F Max Müller, *Auld Lang Syne—Second Series: My Indian Friends* (London: Longmans and Green, 1899), 232, 237.
2. See Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, *Gaurishankar Udayashankar, CSI* (Bombay: Education Society, 1889), 4, and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, ed. Hugh Chisholm (London: Cambridge University, 1911).
3. See Aarti Bhalodia-Dhanani, 'Princes, Diwans and Merchants: Education and Reform in Colonial India', PhD thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 2012, 69 <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/25108/bhalodia-dhanani_dissertation_20122.pdf?sequence=1> accessed 26 July 2014.
4. See letter exchange between Gaurishankar Udayashankar Oza and Dadabhai Naoroji, July–August 1880, K.V. Mehta, *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza: Emnu Jivan Charitra* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1903), 413–4.
5. *Gaurishankar Udaishankar Oza: Emnu Jivan Charitra*, 304–9.
6. See J F Blumhardt, M A, *A Supplementary Catalogue of Marathi and Gujarati Books in the British Museum* (London: William Clowes, 1915), 67 and *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl H Potter, 13 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1, 1995), 1.759.
7. *Auld Lang Syne*, 256.
8. See 'Gowrishankar Vodeyshankar' in <http://www.theodora.com/encyclopedia/v/gowrishankar_vodeyshankar.html> accessed on 21 July 2014.
9. Letter found in the records of Raja of Khetri, a facsimile of which is given here.
10. See Har Bilas Sarda, 'Recollections and Reminiscences' (Ajmer: Vedic Yantralaya, 1951), 23–5; Swami Videhatmananda, 'Ajmer mein Doosri Baar', *Vivek Jyoti*, 44/8 (August 2006), 382–5; 'Har Bilas Sarda on Swami Vivekananda', *Pra-buddha Bharata*, 51/2 (February 1946), 82; and Shankari Prasad Basu, *Vivekananda O Samakalin Bharatvarsha*, 7 vols (Calcutta: Mandal Book House, 1, 1975), 1.76–8.
11. See Swami Gambhirananda, *Sri Ramakrishna Bhaktamalika*, 2 vols (Calcutta: Udbodhan, 1998), 2.13.
12. See Swami Akhandananda, *From Holy Wanderings to the Service of God in Man*, (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1979), 30–3.
13. See Swami Chetanananda, *God Lived with Them* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2006), 329 and Swami Aseshananda, *Glimpses of A Great Soul: A Portrait of Swami Saradananda* (Hollywood: Vedanta, 1982), 30–2.
14. See *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 8.291 and 6.246.

Franklin B Sanborn: A Reassessment

Somenath Mukherjee

WHEN DESTINY DECIDES to make history it acts in ways beyond our understanding. The life of Swami Vivekananda is strewn with scores of such instances. Often situations appearing to be insurmountable obstacles, finally took an opposite turn. One such occasion was when Swamiji reached Chicago a month before the Parliament of Religions. In that distant land, he was unknown and uninvited with hardly a purse to sustain him beyond a few days. It was more than sufficient to crush any person of however strong a mental disposition. But being the person that he was, Swamiji knew that his ability would be tested every now and then. Swamiji meanwhile got acquainted with Katherine Abbot Sanborn, a lady of rare intellect and eminence, while travelling from Vancouver to Winnipeg on the *CPA Atlantic Express*. Within a year of her encounter with Swamiji on the railway coach, Katherine wrote in her autobiography: 'I had met him in the observation car of the Canadian Pacific, where even the gigantically grand scenery of mountains, canyons, glaciers, and the Great Divide could not take my eyes entirely from the cosmopolitan travellers, all en route for Chicago. ... But most of all was I impressed by the monk, a magnificent specimen of manhood—six feet two, as handsome as Salvini¹ at his best, with a lordly, imposing stride, as if he ruled the universe, and soft, dark eyes that could flash fire if roused or dance with merriment if the conversation amused him.'²

Kate gives us a picture of how Swamiji was then attired: 'He wore a bright yellow turban

many yards in length, a red ochre robe, the badge of his calling; this was tied with a pink sash, broad and heavily befringed. Snuff-brown trousers and russet shoes completed the outfit' (8–9). She further writes: 'He spoke better English than I did, was conversant with ancient and modern literature, would quote easily and naturally from Shakespeare or Longfellow or Tennyson, Darwin, Müller, Tyndall; could repeat pages of our Bible, was familiar with and tolerant of all creeds. He was an education, an illumination, a revelation!' (9). Kate's impressions betray the profound impact Swamiji had upon her, in the short span of their journey together: 'I told him, as we parted, I should be most pleased to present him to some men and women of learning and general culture, if by any chance he should come to Boston' (*ibid.*).

This was obviously an amazing invitation which would play a determining role in the life of Swami Vivekananda. We know how the Bhagavadgita once made inroads into Massachusetts through the friendship between Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82). And now we shall see how in mid-August 1893 Swami Vivekananda, one of the earliest exponents of Vedanta in the US, also went to Massachusetts en route to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

An Outstanding Lady

With insufficient funds to support him in a costly city like Chicago, Swamiji decided to stay elsewhere before the Parliament of Religions began. He remembered the invitation of Kate Sanborn



Kate Sanborn

and decided to become a guest in her Breezy Meadows farm house near Metcalf, Massachusetts. Kate recounts: 'I received a telegram of forty-five words announcing that my reverend friend

of the observation car was at Quincy House, Boston, and awaiting my orders. ... I had urged him to accept my hospitalities if he felt lonely or needed help. I had promised those introductions to Harvard professors, Concord philosophers, New York capitalists, women of fame, position, and means, with brilliant gifts in writing and conversation.'³

But the time of year made Kate a bit uneasy: 'It was mid-August. Not a soul was in town, and how could I entertain my gaily appareled pundit? I was aghast, but telegraphed bravely: "Yours received. Come to-day; 4:20 train, Boston and Albany"' (ibid.). It is more than obvious from what Kate wrote that beyond his wish to save some money, Swamiji was drawn by the assurance of the company she had promised. She continued: 'It was trying and vastly embarrassing to have my Oriental visitor inquire in rotund but melancholy and doubting tones: "Where are these influential gentlemen, these women you promised me? I must see them, and begin my struggle for my poor people"' (12). From this utterance of Swamiji, we know of his eagerness to

mix with the influential people of America for seeking help for the poor of India. Kate further writes: 'The Mail bag was stuffed next morning with frantic appeals for help, and I am proud to say that my friends rallied nobly from their vacation haunts by seashore, lake, and mountain, and my careless promise was through them most gloriously fulfilled' (13).

This was how the famous Harvard professor John Henry Wright, an acquaintance of Kate, would come one day to meet Swamiji from the nearby seacoast. He was vacationing there with his family; and eventually, came out with the famous letter introducing Swamiji to the authorities of the Parliament of Religions. The rest, as we all know, is history.

Kate Sanborn was fifty-four when she met Swami Vivekananda and was unquestionably a notable personality in American intellectual society. This is proved by her obituary in the *New York Times* on 10 July 1917: 'Author and Teacher Dies Close to Her 78th Birthday—Metcalf, Mass., July 9, Miss Katherine Abbott Sanborn (Kate Sanborn) who earned her first money by writing while she was still in short frocks, died here today near the close of her seventy-seventh year. Miss Sanborn was born in Hanover, N H, 11 July 1839, the eldest daughter of Professor Edwin David Sanborn and Mary Ann Webster Sanborn. At the age of twelve she was paid for a newspaper article she had written, and she commenced teaching elocution at the age of seventeen. She taught in Packer Institute in Brooklyn for two years. She was five years Professor of English Literature at Smith College. In 1884 her "Round Table Series of Literary Lessons" was published. Notable among her books are: "Adopting an Abandoned Farm," "My Literary Zoo," "Vanity and Insanity," "The Rainbow," and "A Truthful Woman in Southern California."'⁴



Franklin Benjamin Sanborn

America Opens Her Doors

Swami Vivekananda reached Breezy Meadows on 18 August 1893. In his long letter to Alasinga Perumal on August 20 he writes: 'Just now I am living as the guest of an old lady in a village near Boston. I accidentally made her acquaintance in the railway train, and she invited me to come over and live with her. I have an advantage in living with her, in saving for some time my expenditure of £1 per day, and she has the advantage of inviting her friends over here and showing them a curio from India!'⁵ What we know today about his stay at Breezy Meadows is to a great extent from this letter; but somehow its date appears to be anomalous.

In this letter Swamiji wrote: 'A cousin of my lady friend who is coming to-day to see me writes to her, "A real Hindu devotee is an interesting study but I am too old to be cheated by the esoteric Buddhists!"'⁶ This cousin of Kate was Franklin Benjamin Sanborn; and by 'esoteric Buddhists'

he, according to Marie Louise Burke, had in mind 'an exponent of Theosophy'. Franklin's interest in Swami Vivekananda had surely in its root a letter, as we just saw, among the many Kate reportedly wrote to people she decided Swamiji should meet. Besides, Franklin's letter expressing aversion to 'esoteric Buddhists' obviously required time to reach Kate and that excludes the possibility of his visit to Breezy Meadows on 20 August.

Besides, elsewhere in this letter Swamiji wrote: 'Yesterday Mrs Johnson, the lady superintendent of the women's prison, was here. They don't call it prison but reformatory here. It is the grandest thing I have seen in America. How the inmates are benevolently treated, how they are reformed and sent back as useful members of society; how grand, how beautiful, you must see to believe! And, oh, how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low, in India.'⁷

But what the *Boston Transcript* writes on 23 August 1893 proves that this visit was not made on 19 August, but on the 22nd instead: 'Swami Virckananda [*sic*] of India, a Brahmin monk who is on his way to the parliament of religions to be held at Chicago in September, is the guest of Miss Kate Sanborn at her "abandoned farm" in Metcalf, Mass. Last evening he addressed the inmates of the Sherborn Reformatory for Women upon the manners, customs and mode of living in his country.'⁸

And lastly, on 25 August 1893 the *Boston Evening Transcript* wrote in its 'Personal' column: 'The Swami Vere Kananda [*sic*] of India, the Brahmin monk who was in this country for the purpose of attending the parliament of religions at Chicago next month, arrived in Boston yesterday, in company with Mr F B Sanborn of Concord' (1.26). Let us see what Swamiji wrote to Alasinga in his above-mentioned letter: 'From this village I am going to Boston tomorrow.'⁹ And we know that Swamiji did not leave Breezy Meadows on 21st

August. Therefore, the obvious conclusion could either be that the letter was not written on 20 August, but on the 23rd, or alternatively, that it was not written on a single day. Considering its length and varied topics covered in it and also in want of further proof, it would be preferable to settle on the second alternative.

Here a few words on Mrs Johnson, whose visit to Swamiji might have kindled his interest to visit her Reformatory, deserve inclusion, for it would throw light on Franklin Sanborn as well. Her full name was Ellen Cheney Johnson (1829–99). She ‘was born in Athol, Mass. ... While still in her teens she joined a local temperance society, and this cause remained a central interest throughout her life ... Largely under Mrs Johnson’s leadership, a movement to establish a permanent, separate institution for women convicts, staffed and managed by women, where reform work would be possible, took shape in Massachusetts in the post [American Civil] war years ... She had the enthusiastic support ... of Franklin B Sanborn, who as secretary of the Massachusetts board of charities was making this body a model governmental agency. ... In her administration of the prison Ellen Johnson adopted the most enlightened practices of the day, making Sherborn the model women’s institutions in the United States. ... A prisoner once wrote: “No one outside can have more than the remotest conception of ... her executive ability and her great influence. Her heart is just overflowing with kindness and charity. She unites mercy with unflinching justice as I believe very few could.”¹⁰ The Sherborn Reformatory was started ‘by social reformers with the intent of actually changing the lives of its inmates rather than merely incarcerating them. To accomplish this mission, the women were put to work on the four-hundred-acre farm that surrounded the imposing brick



The Sanborn Home in Concord

prison building.’¹¹ Here we may marvel as to how even from the beginning of his days in the US Swamiji could interact with some of the best of that country; and more so, how those elites of a distant foreign land were from the beginning drawn to an unknown Indian monk having had only an inkling of his spirituality and brilliance.

Further news about Swami Vivekananda is available in a letter of Mary Tappan Wright which, *inter alia*, states that he had reached Annisquam, a little seaside resort forty miles north-east of Boston, on Friday, 25 August.¹² During the weekend Swamiji remained at Annisquam as a guest of John H Wright and gave his first speech in the West. He also interacted with many of the elite Westerners holidaying at Annisquam in response to their overt interest in him and his country. He left on Monday, 28 August, for Salem where he remained during the succeeding week and delivered a couple of lectures. Swamiji’s host in Salem, Mary Tappan Wright is still remembered in the US as one of the pioneer women who contributed greatly in elevating the country’s social mores through the American Women Club movement. Leaving Salem on Monday, 4 September, Swamiji reached Saratoga Springs, New York. There he stayed at the Sanatorium hotel as the guest of Franklin Sanborn.

A Relevant History

In 1532 King Henry VIII declared the English church independent of the pope and thereby opened the road to the Reformation. Further religious reforms by his successors led to religious persecutions. In the 1620s leaders of the English state and church grew increasingly unsympathetic to the English Protestants, known as the Puritans. These Puritans wished to reform or purify the Church of England from what they considered to be unacceptable residues of Roman Catholicism and believed that the Church of England was a true church but in need of major reforms. Since the beginning of 1630 this had led as many as 20,000 of them to emigrate to an area in America which would later be recognized as New England; while some of them went to West Indies. These Puritans eventually settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was situated around Salem and Boston. The territory of the colony included what is known today as central New England, covering parts of the states of Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

‘Many of the British North American Colonies that joined in 1776 to form the United States of America were settled in the 17th century for religious purposes by men and women who, in the face of European persecution, refused to compromise passionately held religious convictions and risked the perilous crossing of the Atlantic to practice their religion.’¹³ ‘Just as the land shaped New Englanders, so they shaped the land. ... The combination of Calvinism, soil and climate in New England made for energy, purposefulness, sternness, stubbornness, self-reliance, and resourcefulness. Righteous New Englanders prided themselves on being God’s chosen people. They long boasted that Boston was “the hub of the universe”—at least in spirit. ... New England has had an incalculable impact on the rest of the nation. ... The democratic

town meeting, the tidy school-house, and “Yankee ingenuity”, all originally fostered by the flinty fields and comfortless climate of New England, came to be claimed by all Americans as a proud national heritage. And the fabled “New England conscience”, born of the steadfast Puritan faith, left a legacy of high idealism in the national character and inspired many later reformers.”¹⁴

(To be continued)

References

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Eternal Words

Swami Adbhutananda

Compiled by Swami Siddhananda; translated by Swami Sarvadevananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

I AM A MONK. Do not commit any fraud or trickery on me. If you want to do some business, businesses often will not run without such things. But there is no compulsion on you to do such trickery. Whatever be the case, do not do all those things to me. I am here at Benaras. I call upon God's name and eat simple food. I do not spend money uselessly. Then why are you trying to play such tricks with me?

I am telling you repeatedly to give up your addiction. You will not listen to that in any way. That addiction has taken possession of you. My dear, so long as I am here, it may continue. What will you do after that? At the end, you yourself will curse me and say, 'I stayed so close to him; even then, I had to suffer so much?' Wherever you stay you will remain happy; there will be no want of anything if you remain genuine. If you do mischief, you will suffer.

The amount of labour Kedar Baba and Charu Babu gave with all their heart and soul for the Sevashrama of Kashi cannot be expressed in words. They obeyed Swamiji's instructions. You can see that very clearly. Kedar Baba went to Kolkata to raise funds for the Sevashrama. I asked him, 'Why will people give you money if you do not show them any work?' But at that time, he could not understand what I meant by this, and he got annoyed. Now, the work is going on very well. Whoever sees the work becomes happy. That is why, people are also giving money. You are seeing that yourself.

Immediately after the marriage of sister Lakshmi, the Master said, 'I can see that Lakshmi will not go anymore to her father-in-law's house.' Hearing those words, everybody started repeating, 'What do you say? One should not say such inauspicious words.' But what the Master said came to pass. Soon after that sister Lakshmi became a widow.

Brothers who are born of the same mother belong to each other for this life, but brother disciples are brothers for this life and the next. What a relationship this is cannot be expressed in words! The Master used to say that, 'The attraction for a devotee is more intense than that for one's blood relation.'

Family life is not bad at any point of time. My dear, can those families where incarnations and great souls take birth ever be inauspicious? It is the attachment to family that is bad; it is the cause of bondage. It drags one into repeated births and deaths. Moreover, envy, hatred, and quarrels—all these are very bad. All of these are the blemishes of an agitated mind. There will be no trouble for one who can lead a family life thinking that his family belongs to God. Let there be no self-deception of thinking that whatever is good has been done by me but everything which is bad is God's fault; otherwise, you will suffer the consequences.

Every child certainly has a birthright in his father's wealth. If, by his will, the father gives someone a little more, or someone a little less, or doesn't give anything to a dishonest son, then

that is as the father pleases. But, if the father dies without making such arrangements, all brothers should get an equal share. That brother who usurps his brother's share loses both this world and the next.

These are monks. They have received shelter in Divine Mother. Why do you say words which hurt them? If they shed tears and confide their suffering to Divine Mother, then only God knows what will be your fate. One should never say any harsh words even to a single person which will cause pain to their heart. It brings inauspiciousness. Again see, people will be flooded with tears if anyone says some strong words to them. But tears do not come in their eyes while taking the name of God. I see this also as the play of maya!

At the dead of night, Dr Durgacharan arrived. He scolded Hriday, 'Rascal, take me to where the holy man is.' Hriday brought him to the Master. He spread two wooden seats. On one, the Master sat and on the other, Dr Durgacharan sat. For a long time, Durgacharan became speechless and motionless while looking at the Master, not even uttering a single word. Thereafter, he left, telling Hriday to visit him. He frequently visited the Master like this. He alone knows how he used to look at the Master.

Balaram Babu used to take the Master into his inner apartment. Harivallabh Babu did not like that. One day, the Master came to Baghbazar and in the course of a conversation; the name of Harivallabh Babu came up. Girish Babu said, 'Let me go get him.' Harivallabh Babu came and sat before the Master. Without speaking anything, both of them started shedding profuse tears. Harivallabh Babu never expressed why he was weeping. And nothing could be understood of why the Master also wept. To know why Harivallabh Babu cried, or what the Master made him understand, I went up to Puri

to meet him. But I could not discover the reason nor did he disclose it. Harivallabh Babu was such a rich man yet he used to dine with us. He had no pride at all.

Balaram Babu's uncle used to live in Vrindavan. He used to serve the Vaishnavas. I went to him. He used to take great care of me. But I did not associate with him too much. I asked myself, 'Why should I mix with a rich man?' There is never any certainty of knowing what kind of mood that person will be in. He used to say, 'You are monks. That is why you don't like our association.' He used to bring and feed us the prasada of different temple deities.

One day the Master went to Vidyasagar's house to meet him. He told Vidyasagar, 'After so many days, I have merged into the ocean.' Vidyasagar smilingly replied, 'Then please take some salty water.' The Master said smilingly, 'My dear, why will it be like that? You are the ocean of nectar.'

Ramachandra asked Lakshmana for a drink of water. There was no water reservoir there. That is why Lakshmana struck the ground with his arrow. However, as soon as the arrow hit the ground some blood came out. Rama told him, 'Dig up and see what is there.' As soon as he did, Lakshmana saw a frog. Rama asked the frog, 'Why did you not call out?' The frog replied, 'Rama, if others come to kill me, I call upon you. If you come to kill me, tell me, whom else shall I call upon?'

Suresh Mitra used to pay the rent of the monastery building. One day, seeing Suresh Mitra coming, Swamiji said, 'All of you go to the rooftop; who will stay sitting here chit-chatting with him now?' Everyone went up. Suresh Mitra arrived to find that nobody was there. Then, crying, he said, 'I come to you to get consolation for a few moments. If you all behave like this, where shall I go?' Of those who used to supply

the necessities of the Master, Suresh Mitra was one. Had he not helped during that time, there would never have been any monastery and the other things.

After the Master departed, some said, 'The Master used to love me more than others.' Some others said, 'He loved me more than others.' Such quarrel took place frequently. The Master used to love everybody in such a way that everyone would think he loved him more than anyone else. One day, seeing such quarrels, I said, 'Even though the Master did not leave behind any possessions, all of you are still fighting. Had he left something behind, you would have surely filed a lawsuit.'

Gaya is the place of the origin of all the incarnations. Sri Chaitanya originated there and got his initiation. His love for God flourished there. That is the very place where the Master originated. The Lord came to his father in a dream. Again, that is the very place where Buddha originated, attained perfection, and spread the message of love.

Rasmani's father's home was at Halishahar. The condition of her husband improved soon after he married her. Her husband used to purchase materials for exchange. Purchasing them at a low price, he would sell them for a high price. In this way, he used to earn a lot of money. Because of the good fortune of Rasmani, he became rich within a very short period of time.

Rasmani's son-in-law Mathur was very intelligent. He greatly enhanced the income of Rasmani's estate. He used to spend that additional money for many noble purposes. Once, the Master told Mathur Babu, 'Here many devotees will come.' Mathur Babu said, 'Father, I will not see that before my death.' The Master said, 'Mathur, all of them will come—surely come!' Mathur said, 'Father, let me purchase the garden-house of Jadu Mallick. Your devotees will stay there

when they come.' The Master said, 'No, Mathur. Mother will arrange for them; you will not have to do anything.'

Someone told the Master, 'Sir, a naked sadhu has come. People say that he is a good sadhu. Will you go to see him?' The Master said, 'Yes, I went to see him after hearing about him. I saw that, although he is a naked one, he has not yet received the bliss.' My dear, if one just becomes naked, can he become Trailanga Swami? One does not attain bliss by just becoming naked. That is possible only after practice.

One is very fortunate whose death occurs in Kashi. Shiva himself gives the mantra in one's ear. The Master used to say, 'I went by boat to see Manikarnika Ghat in Kashi. I saw the Lord of the universe himself giving the holy name of emancipation at the death of a person and the Divine Mother was cutting their ties of bondage.'

I was massaging the Master's feet. I was thinking I would go on a pilgrimage because I had heard that if one goes on a pilgrimage, one can attain spirituality. The Master read my mind and said, 'Don't go from here, everything is right here. Where shall you move around? Moreover, here you are getting something to eat; don't go, leaving this.' The Master's grace is unconditional. I never went again.

One day, as soon as a servant of the Kali temple left his hookah after smoking tobacco, the Master ran and inhaled from the same hookah. Instantly, the Brahmins of the Kali temple exclaimed, 'This junior priest has lost his caste; we will not eat with him anymore.' The Master started saying, 'Ah, I am redeemed. If I do not have to eat with these rascals, I will be free.'

Trailanga Swami did not make any disciples. The householders can be helped a little bit, but to make a sannyasi disciple is very difficult.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Sri Ramakrishna's Ideas and Our Times: A Retrospect on His 175th Birth Anniversary—A Commemorative Volume

Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math, Howrah Dist., West Bengal 711 202 and Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Kolkata 700 029. xii + 407 pp. ₹ 200.

When great minds dwell on a subject and bring out pearls of wisdom from their research, it becomes a commemorative volume. The present book is a collection of papers presented by eminent people from India and abroad during a seminar organized at Belur Math in 2012 to commemorate the 175th birth centenary of Sri Ramakrishna.

Besides the preface, this book has been divided into six sections. In the first section 'The Life and Times of Sri Ramakrishna', Swami Prabhananda, Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, writes on 'Sri Ramakrishna's Ideas and Our Times'. The swami quotes from various publications during Sri Ramakrishna's times, which is of immense importance to the reader. He mentions the *Indian Mirror* on 28 March 1875 regarding Sri Ramakrishna: 'We met one long ago and were charmed by the depth, penetration and simplicity of his spirit. The never-ceasing metaphors and analogies, in which he indulged, are most of them as apt as they are beautiful' (14). The chapter also mentions *The New Dispensation*, 7 July 1881: 'In the course of an animated conversation with our devotees, the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar lately expounded the Hindu doctrine of Trinity. He spoke of 'Bhagaban', 'Bhagavat' and 'Bhakta' as three entities, yet one in essence—the mysterious three in one. The first signified the Godhead; the second, Scripture or Word; the third, Devotee or Saint' (ibid.).

The second section is titled 'Sri Ramakrishna: The Man and His Personality.' This section has

contributions from eminent senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math, presents his thoughts in a chapter titled 'A Study of Sri Ramakrishna's *Bhavamukha* State of Consciousness through Science, Philosophy and Tradition'.

The third section is 'Sri Ramakrishna's Ideas', in which different authors deal with the subject. The popular saying of Sri Ramakrishna 'As many faiths so many paths' is well presented by Jitendra Nath Mohanty, Emeritus Professor, Department of Philosophy, Temple University, USA. Also, Arindam Chakrabarti's article—'Why Pray to God who can Hear the Ant's Anklets?—Prayer, Freedom and Karma' deserves great praise for its in-depth analysis and lucid presentation.

The ideas of Sri Ramakrishna seem more relevant in this age when everything seems to boil down to the material. The two great enemies of spiritual life Sri Ramakrishna cautioned us about, lust and greed, seem to be haunting us and changing the very paradigm of our lives. It is at this juncture that we need to re-look at Sri Ramakrishna's teachings and find new ways of assimilating them into our lives. This section helps us do this by offering striking insights into the wisdom contained in these teachings.

The remaining sections titled 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita as a Text', 'Sri Ramakrishna and Our Times', and 'Perspectives on Sri Ramakrishna' respectively, wherein authors have dealt with the subject concisely and diligently. The last section ends with two articles in Bengali titled—'Sri Ramakrishna O Vishishtadvaitavad', and, 'Sri Ramakrishna O Tnar Vaishnav Sadhana'.

This volume brings to the reader new insights into the readings and re-readings of the text. A text like the *Kathamrita*, rich with its interpolations and intertextualities, should be contextualised again and again during different eras to find

both intellectual and experiential relevance. That is precisely why the Indian tradition insists on the coming of different prophets in different epochs. Scholars of the order of M Sivaramkrishna and Jeffery D Long bring this flavour to the reading of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

This hardbound book is generously priced and printed on good quality paper. The readers are sure to benefit immensely from these thoughtful essays.

Santosh Kumar Sharma
Kharagpur, West Bengal



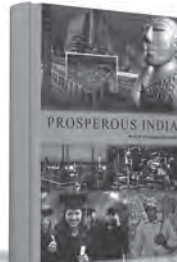
**The Rainforest or
From Protozoa to God**
Parimal Mukhopadhyay

Mother Publishing, 41/A Beniatola Lane, Kolkata 700009. 2011. vi + 94 pp. ₹ 200.

When a book has a fancy title and the back cover reads 'This book may change your world', you are intrigued, to say the least. The curiosity only deepens when you learn that the author is a former professor of the Indian Statistical Institute, a premier academic institution of India. The author's note at the end—it should have been in the beginning—promises to keep the treatment brief, precise, and free from any theological, religious, or dogmatic presumptions. With the mind thus conditioned, when setting out to devour the book, the reader is in for a big disappointment. Throughout the book the author refers to classical theological or religious themes like karma, consciousness, soul, and prayer. One is at a loss at the author presuming that everyone would believe in rebirth. Further, the slim volume is full of obvious truisms and is replete with definitions of different words like chemistry, astronomy, and biology. Name dropping has been resorted to, to give the sound of authenticity but not only is this purpose not fulfilled, errors like writing 'Steven Hawking' instead of 'Stephen Hawking' betrays lack of seriousness and professional copy-editing. It is difficult to situate this book and one starts questioning the very need for such a publication. Concepts of brain, mind, dreams, and consciousness are casually referred to, avoiding any serious thought on the scientific understanding on these issues, which

is painful to the reader. While every attempt to trace spirituality in nature is commendable, there needs to be depth to such an approach. The present book lacks both purpose and depth. It is nothing more than a pointer to thinking beyond the established constructs and is another example of how a profound thought can be marred at the hands of inefficient writers and editors.

PB



Prosperous India

Prof. P Kanagasabapathi

Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust, No 5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai 600 005. 2013. 160 pages. ₹ 100.

A refreshing feature of *Prosperous India* is the optimistic tone of the author which springs from his unshakeable faith in the native genius of the common man in India. Thanks to its own time-tested systems, 'India remained the most prosperous nation in the world for the longest period in history, with sustainable systems that enabled social peace and higher achievements, till the interference of the Europeans' (5). Mark the important point. History also records innumerable assaults by Islamic hordes who repeatedly ravished India's wealth—Mahmud of Ghazni invaded her sixteen times; Ulugh Khan's robbing temple after temple in South India is a tale too deep for tears—but she remained rich; and hence the recurring attacks by avaricious invaders. India became poor only when the British traders entered her sacred land.

Calling upon an array of Indian and foreign scholars to stand witness to his thesis, Prof. Kanagasabapathi says that in agriculture Indians were second to none and knew how not to waste. Indeed, the Greek historian could write that 'famine has never visited India, and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food' (21). Nor did India lag behind in science, technology, social systems, and political governance. For centuries India glowed almost in all facets. Then came the British traders. The tragedy that happened not long after has been documented by Dadabhai Naoroji in his *Poverty and Un-British Rule in*

India (1901) where he compares the British Empire to a blood-sucking vampire. Dadabhai's was not the lone voice. Even foreign scholars like James Mill and Will Durant have spoken of this tragedy.

The author discusses how this decline began from the time the East India Company entered India in 1600 AD. By the time the British left the Indian shores, Indians had become slaves to the 'white man'. As Sri Aurobindo pointed out, India had fallen into a swoon of helplessness 'until the Master of a mightier hypnosis laid His finger on India's eyes and cried "Awake." Then only the spell was broken, the slumbering mind realized itself and the dead soul lived again.' Unfortunately for India, the policymakers headed by Jawaharlal Nehru were not ready to heed the voices of great Indians like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi. Having no idea of the ground realities, they swore by socialism and 'imposed [it] on this great country, which had had her own time-tested economic systems that had sustained her as an economic power and prosperous nation for centuries' (67).

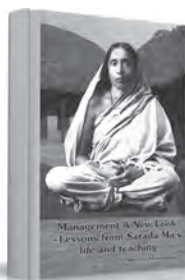
This system of ancient India, clearly enunciated in this book in the course of a few short chapters is that Indians knew, to borrow a phrase of Schumacher, that small is beautiful. They attached more value to personal savings and family savings than large scale borrowings for doing business, entrepreneurship by individuals—'85 million entrepreneurs, perhaps the largest number in the world' (84). The family and community ideal is the backbone of the non-corporate sector and gives it steely strength to dominate the Indian economy. This is found in the 'clusters' in places like Namakkal, Surat, and Ludhiana.

Prof. Kanagasabapathi makes bold to say that the Indian economy is not actually dependent on the state. Here women's contribution is not less than that of men and if Indians take the right path, they can even avoid foreign investments. India's history records the nation's brilliance in trade and business. It is nothing new either. Kennedy is quoted as speaking highly of maritime commerce between India and Babylon in the 6th century BC. Page after page one gets significant inputs for revising one's view of India being a weak, helpless, poverty-stricken nation. The final shot from the author is that though India knows how to earn, it

has actually earned to help others—that is Indian Dharma. Why do Indians need a socialist economy if they have this dharma as their ideal? Despite Westernization and all the wrong policies of the government, this religious ideal continues to keep the land's economy strong. The conclusion of *Prosperous India* injects a shot of tremendous self-confidence into the youth—the book was originally written as essays for Yuva Bharati: 'This is a remarkable quality that keeps the Indian family system intact. It is also a distinct feature of India that makes the economy to move forward with confidence, proving to the world that the culture of this land plays a crucial role in matters related to economic development' (155–6).

Prema Nandakumar

Research and Literary Critic
Srirangam



**Management A New Look—
Lessons from Sarada Ma's
Life and Teaching**

Dr Abani Nath Mukhopadhyay

Sarada Mandir Trust, Khardah, Kulinpara, 24 Parganas (N), West Bengal. 2010. xvi + 143 pp. ₹ 100.

The exemplary life and teachings of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother has inspired many interpretations and studies. The present book attempts to look out for management lessons in Holy Mother's life. The author is a disciple of Sri Akshaya Chaitanya who was himself a disciple and biographer of Holy Mother. This book is thus a product of inspired effort. Various facets of the Holy Mother's personality have been traced through incidents from her life and these have been classified into different sections such as planning, organisation, motivation, leadership, decision-making, communication, and inspiration. The author has also tried to relate these teachings to the present-day managerial environment. While the overall effort is commendable, an awful lack of copy-editing renders this work unreadable. Not a single page passes without errors. However, this work could be an inspiration for a study on these lines by more scholarly and efficient writers.

PB

REPORTS

Commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

The following centres held various programmes to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. **Bhubaneswar:** Value Education for Parents and Professionals' seminar on 27 July 2014, attended by about 400 persons. **Delhi:** 208 teachers trained between 30 June and 23 July for conducting value education programmes in schools. The centre signed a memorandum of understanding with the Central Board of Secondary Education for implementing its 'Awakened Citizen Programme', in which teachers will be trained in imparting value education to students adopting a three-year teaching module developed by the centre. **Hyderabad:** 'Vivekananda Centre for Counselling and Positive Thinking' started in January 2011 has so far attended about 1,000 cases of the problems of children, youth, and women. **Itanagar:** A youth convention on 19 July, attended by 400 persons. A spiritual retreat on 20 July, attended by about 300 devotees. **Mangalore:** A two-day national seminar on Education, 'The Challenges and Solution in the Light of the Teachings of Swami Vivekananda' on 11 and 12 July, attended by 250 college students. **Swamiji's Ancestral House, Kolkata:** A classical dance programme by Pandit Birju Maharaj on 21 June, attended by about 450 people. On the centre's initiative, three public meetings were held at different places in and around Kolkata on 22, 26, and 30 June. In all, about 1,350 people attended. **Vivekananda**



*Convocation Ceremony of
Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University*

University: With the help of a number of organizations, the university conducted 52 value education programmes for professionals from various fields from 14 November 2013 to 15 March 2014, in which about 15,000 people took part. Forty-four value education programmes for parents and teachers were also held, attended by nearly 12,000 people. All these programmes covered 19 districts of West Bengal. A two-day value education workshop for medical professionals was conducted at the Institute of Culture, Kolkata, on 15 and 16 February, in which about 300 doctors, nurses and paramedical staff participated.

News of Branch Centres

Ramakrishna Mission, Viveknagar (Tripura), organized a blood donation camp on 29 June, which was inaugurated by Sri Manik Sarkar, the chief minister of Tripura. A total of 76 persons donated blood in the camp. On the sacred occasion of Ratha Yatra, **Ramakrishna Math, Puri,** conducted a medical camp from 29 June to 7 July, in which about 700 patients were treated. The centre also served lemonade to 25,000 pilgrims. Books on religious topics were distributed among 1,000 students. **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Puri,** served lemonade to about 5000 pilgrims and distributed 7,000 pouches of drinking water during the Ratha Yatra festival. In the medical camp organized on this occasion 106 patients were treated. The centre also

served lemonade to pedestrians throughout the summer. **Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University** held its ninth foundation anniversary celebrations and the annual convocation at its Belur campus on 4 July. Smt Smriti Zubin Irani, Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India, was the guest-in-chief and delivered the convocation address. Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, who is also the Chancellor of the university, presided over the meeting and awarded the certificates, degrees, and diplomas to 123 students who successfully graduated from the Belur, Narendrapur, and Ranchi faculties of the university. The newly constructed 'Vivekananda Cultural Centre' at **Vivekanandar Illam of Ramakrishna Math, Chennai**, was declared open by Ms J Jayalalithaa, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, on 8 July through video conferencing. Swami Suhitananda inaugurated the newly started 'Ma Sarada Vocational Training Centre' at **Ramakrishna Math, Baghbar, on 11 July. Ramakrishna Math, Nagpur**, has launched Jnana Vahini, a mobile bookstall. It was flagged off by Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 17 July. On 20 July Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj released a CD containing the archives of 56 years of Jivan Vikas, the Marathi monthly published by Nagpur centre. Seventeen students of the schools of **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ramharipur**, have been selected for National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship, 2013. All the 21 students of **Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara**, who appeared in the Madhyamik (class 10) examination conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education this year passed with first division marks, 20 of them securing star marks (75% or above in the aggregate). **Ramakrishna Math,**

Lucknow, provided Vitamin-A capsules to 2,598 underprivileged children of four schools in Lucknow district and free glasses to 71 children with refractory errors in the month of July.

Relief

Drought Relief • Rajasthan: From 26 June to 27 July, **Khetri** centre distributed 4,10,000 l of drinking water among 1,360 families facing acute water scarcity.

Flood Relief • Odisha: Following heavy rainfall, some areas of Jajpur district were affected by flood. Many mud-houses were destroyed and agricultural lands inundated. **Kothar** centre immediately started primary relief. The centre distributed 5,000 kg chira (rice flakes), 2,500 kg chattu (gram flour), 1,300 kg gur (molasses), 2,500 kg salt, 5,104 packets of biscuits, and 25,200 matchboxes among 2,500 affected families of 20 wards in Jajpur district from 25 to 28 July. **Uttarakhand:** Continuing its primary relief in Chamoli district, **Dehradun** centre distributed 53,800 kg rice, 10,760 kg dal (lentils), 10,760 l edible oil, 4,304 kg salt, 200 blankets and 460 solar lanterns among 2,152 families of 32 villages from 27 June to 9 July. **West Bengal:** In the wake of inundation and water logging caused by high tides in South 24 Parganas district, **Manasadwip** centre served cooked food (rice, dal, and vegetable curry) and distributed 1,940 kg muri (puffed rice), 665 kg sewai (vermicelli), 332 kg sugar, 66 kg milk powder, and 66 kg dry fruits among 2,110 families of 25 villages in Mousuni (Namkhana block) and Sagar Island from 22 to 31 July.

Distress Relief • The following centres distributed various items, shown against their names, to needy people: (a) **Antpur:** 506 saris and 100 dhotis from 12 to 22 July. (b) **Belgharia:** 400 dhotis, 721 lungis, 2,130 sets of assorted garments and 400 steel buckets in the month of June. (c) **Naora:** 443 textbooks among 182 students on 28 and 29 June. The centre also distributed 100 children's garments, 175 saris, 100 dhotis, and 35 lungis on 27 July. (d) **Ulsoor:** 1,00,000 notebooks, 1,580 slates, 15,000 pens, 13,500 pencils, 13,500 erasers, 13,500 pencil sharpeners, and 5,400 geometry boxes among 19,437 students of 151 schools in Bangalore Rural, Chikkaballapur, and Tumkur districts of Karnataka from 16 June to 7 July.

Economic Rehabilitation • On 6 July **Malda** centre distributed 2 sewing machines and 10 bicycles to needy people.



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